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THE FUNCTION OF POETRY AND THE ROLE OF THE POET IN CANADIAN LITERARY MAGAZINES FROM NEW FRONTIER THROUGH DELTA

by

© RICHARD F. HORNSEY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE FUNCTION OF POETRY AND THE ROLE OF THE POET IN CANADIAN LITERARY MAGAZINES FROM NEW FRONTIER THROUGH DELTA

submitted by RICHARD F. HORNSEY

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ABSTRACT

The following historical-critical study of ten literary magazines published in Canada between 1936 and 1966 indicates what they reveal both individually and collectively about the changing attitudes toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet during a significant period in the development of modern poetry. The thesis is based on the premise that little poetry magazines accurately reflect the manner in which critical ideas have developed in English Canada and underlying this is the assumption that in the poetry published by these magazines we have the most substantial evidence of how such critical ideas have been artistically implemented.

The editorial policies, critical articles and Canadian poetry of: New Frontier, Contemporary Verse, Preview, First Statement, Direction, Northern Review, Contact, CIV/n, Combustion and Delta are analyzed and compared in order to show what their respective critical attitudes were, how they are related, and to what extent they are borne out in the poetry chosen by the editors to represent their views.

Following Chapter One which reviews the scholarship devoted to the little magazine in Canada and explains the structure of the thesis, Chapter Two is concerned with New Frontier and the ethos of the Thirties. The proletarian

poetic which became popular during this period resulted from the poets' need to re-evaluate their role as artists and the function their art should serve in light of the extraordinary social and political circumstances. The "agitprop" writing which prevailed was the most extreme manifestation of an interest in the social function of poetry which has since been sustained as an important shaping force in Canadian literature. Because of its concern with radical, avant garde poetry and ideas, New Frontier can be seen as the forerunner of the aggressive little magazines of the Forties which also sought to redefine the role of the poet in society and the function of his art.

Chapter Three deals with the poetry and criticism of the magazines of the Forties: Contemporary Verse, Preview, First Statement, Direction and Northern Review. These magazines show a marked interest in writing which was imbued with what Patrick Anderson termed "the feel of people" and as a whole they reflect the attitude that poetry should communicate with the individual in a realistic, personal way rather than speak idealistically to a collective proletariat as the poetry of the Thirties had done.

Chapter Four shows John Sutherland narrowing his view of poetry and the poet in Northern Review during the Fifties while writers such as Irving Layton, Louis Dudek and Raymond Souster were widening their poetic horizons by relating modern Canadian poetry to the body of world literature. Contact and Combustion introduced American

and European experimental writers into Canada and emphasized the need to judge poetry by literary and aesthetic standards rather than social or political ones. But CIV/n and Delta indicate that the belief in poetry as an instrument of social reform remained strong and in Delta Louis Dudek emphasized again the importance of the social function of poetry and criticism which had its roots in the proletarian poetic of the Thirties. Although opposed by many of his contemporaries who were interested either in "Beat" experimentation or mythopoeic techniques, Dudek's conviction that poetry should be more accessible and relevant to the average intelligent reader remained unshakeable.

Thus the proletarian poetic of New Frontier initiated an interest in the social function of poetry and the social responsibility of the poet which with modifications has continued to be a most important characteristic of modern Canadian poetry down to the present day.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

If the development of modern English Canadian poetry is approached from the perspective of the "little" magazines which have traditionally served as outlets for new writing and new critical ideas, it becomes increasingly evident that some of the major insights provided by the magazines come from their various attempts to define the role of the poet and explain the function of his art. Since these magazines often come into existence because their editors have no better means by which to make their critical ideas and creative writing public, it is possible to understand the continuing life and death of the magazines as an evolution of poetic and critical ideas which can be considered avant-garde at particular points in time. But because so many of the ideas in the poetry and criticism first published in these magazines later gained wide acceptance and influence, it is obvious that as Mandel observes: "among the shambles of little magazines and their polemics can be found some of the major critical focuses in Canadian writing."[1] In the same vein, Gnarowski has recently gone so far as to suggest that "all the important events in poetry and most of the initiating manifestoes and examples of change are to be found in the little magazine."[2] The fact is, however, that the little magazine as an important literary phenomenon in Canada

has been given only cursory attention by scholars and critics.

The critical positions represented by some of the magazines have been discussed intermittently in connection with other subjects but except for a few pieces which have found their way into anthologies and collections, the poetry of the magazines has been largely ignored. The few critical articles exclusively devoted to the subject tend to be historical rather than analytical and the result has been that while the general process by which the little magazine has developed in Canada has become evident, the implications of the literary and social principles on which they were founded remain vague and unfamiliar.

With few exceptions a review of the criticism of little magazines to date reveals a tendency toward repetition and generalization. In the introduction to their chapter on the little magazines in The Making Of Modern Poetry In Canada, Dudek and Gnarowski attempt to sum up the development of three kinds of little magazines in Canada:

> Historically, it may be argued that the little magazine in Canada begins with the first type, the coterie magazine, and move later into magazines of the second and third type, the eclectic and personal magazines. The development seems to be natural, tracing the history of modern poetry from its beginning to a stage of variety and confidence: first, as the new poetry calls for a campaign of literary action; we see a moderate and tolerant group tentatively organizing an advance in the direction of modernism, mainly at war with the old Victorian standards. This is the enterprise of F. R. Scott, A. J. M. Smith and their group in the 1920's and thirties. But as this poetry becomes more confident, better entrenched, and as the pattern of modern expression becomes diversified, the eclectic magazine appears on the scene, as in Alan Crawley's Contemporary Verse, and later in

Tamarack Review. Finally, with the appearance of flourishing personalities, either confident young men carrying on with new experiments or older poets developed to a greater independence, we get the personal magazine- Island edited by Victor Coleman, or Delta edited by Louis Dudek. Thus, when a large new movement is in its beginning, we would expect a group magazine to arise, as in the case of Tish in Vancouver. And in the later stages one would expect the other types to appear in succession, as in the case of Frank Davey's Open Letter, and George Bowering's Imago. Vancouver's Prism, in fact, is struggling with difficulty to establish itself as a quality eclectic magazine.[3]

Although the truth of the fact that these three kinds of magazines exist cannot be denied, the linear development from the group magazine through the eclectic to the personal magazine is a great deal less consistent than the above implies. Aside from the fact that magazines like The McGill Fortnightly Review and The Canadian Mercury, associated with Smith and Scott during the 1920's, were not little magazines in policy or form, a more careful look at the significant magazines published between New Frontier's first issue in 1936 and Delta's last issue in 1966 reveals that all of the magazines published up until 1952 were, in fact, "group" magazines. Alan Crawley's Contemporary Verse is no exception when it is remembered that the editorial board included Dorothy Livesay, Floris McLaren, Anne Marriott and Doris Ferne. This is indeed a coterie of Vancouver writers who based their editorial policy upon publishing good writing regardless of subject matter or regional origin. In his editorial to the fourth number which appeared in June 1942, Crawley outlined his aims as follows:

The aims of Contemporary Verse are simple and direct and seem

worthy and worthwhile. These aims are to entice and stimulate the writing and reading of poetry and to provide means for its publication free from restraint of politics, prejudices and placations, and to keep open its pages to poetry that is sincere in thought and expression and contemporary in theme and treatment and technique.[4]

Although the policy appears eclectic, it is important to recall that preceded only by New Frontier which ceased publication in 1937, Contemporary Verse was in many ways an initiator rather than the end result of an ongoing development. The magazine appeared at a time when there was a definite need for an outlet for poetry and, as a group, the editors took it upon themselves to provide it. The other magazines of the Forties: First Statement, Preview, Direction and Northern Review in its early stages were all products of relatively homogeneous editorial groups with specific literary points of view.

It was not until 1952 when Raymond Souster began Contact, that the "personal" magazine appeared in Canada. The other magazines of the Fifties with the exception of CIV/n, are all personal magazines. Contact, Delta, Combustion, and Alphabet in the Sixties, among others, are all products of the aesthetics of individual poet-editors. Even though Gnarowski's outline is helpful as a guide to the development of the little magazines in Canada, it is more accurate to understand the development as two-fold, from group magazines in the late Thirties and Forties toward the personal magazines of the Fifties. The few eclectic magazines seem to appear intermittently when editors have no well defined

editorial policy. One can agree, however, that the advent of the one-man magazine suggests that critical attitudes have evolved to the point where a single editor has found it necessary to initiate a private publication which is closely aligned with his particular aesthetic position. The personal magazine indicates a crystallizing of poetic theory which is the culmination of a lengthy period of search and experimentation. It does not necessarily indicate a final critical understanding of who the poet should be and what poetry should do, but rather suggests that specific points of critical departure have been reached by individuals who have been a part of a serious dialectical struggle.

Following their introduction Dudek and Gnarowski reprint three articles on the little magazine in Canada. In Dudek's "The Role Of The Little Magazines In Canada,"[5] the little magazine is defined as "the embattled literary reaction of intellectual minority groups to the commercial middle-class magazines of fiction and advertising which had evolved in the nineteenth century."[6] These publications also represent a move "away from the popular culture shaped by the big magazines and newspapers."[7] Although these assertions are generally true, they remain philosophical rather than practical explanations of the role played by the magazines. Few little magazine editors begin their venture with these principles in mind. Rather their wish is to provide a place where writing which conforms to their particular literary standards may readily be published. It can be argued that

this is because the established magazines and newspapers would refuse to publish much of the material, but in actuality, a more precise reason that the little magazine appears is that there are simply not enough other magazines to do the job. Very few little magazines make money or achieve a large readership but this is not because they do not try. Most begin with the assumption that the time and effort required to produce them will eventually result in literary influence if not financial profit. But the most important factor seems to be that of convenience. If poetry and ideas can be disseminated at first hand, there is little reason to attempt to achieve the same results through secondary outlets. There is also the possibility that the little magazine will serve as an "emblem" of a specific editorial policy or literary stance and that it will be strongly identified with the critical attitudes of its editors.

This is not to suggest that the little magazine generally begins as an embryonic "big" magazine. It is true that they usually serve the special purpose of publishing writing which, because it is radical in some way, appeals to a limited number of readers. The real value of these magazines lies in their willingness to publish new writers who normally could only get into print after a great deal of time and difficulty. Therefore, little magazines are founded more upon expediency than a reaction to established commercial magazines and newspapers. They appear when editors feel it

necessary to make their critical views immediately public through writers who are often not well known.

Dudek goes on to give a brief history of the little magazine in Canada which he maintains began in 1941 with the establishment of Contemporary Verse. Although this is true, there is considerable doubt that the Thirties can be dismissed as having "no magazines of poetry and experiment representing the rebellion of the creative minority against the profit-motive literature of mass-readership and cultural appeasement."[8] It will be shown in chapter two of this study that the 1930's were of considerable importance not only in redefining the Canadian writer's understanding of himself as an artist but also of the function that his art should perform. It will also be shown that New Frontier, although not exclusively a literary magazine, was exactly the kind of rebellious publication that Dudek maintains did not exist during the period.

Leading toward a definition of the aim and role of the little magazine Dudek says:

> It is about the issue in Allen Tate's statement a few years ago that the "central literary tradition is being fostered today by three or four journals whose combined circulation does not exceed three thousand." It is about the same issue described by T. S. Eliot when he closed the files of Criterion: "For this immediate future, perhaps for a long way ahead, the continuity of culture may have to be maintained by . . . The small and obscure papers and reviews, those which are hardly read by anyone but their own contributors."[9]

Sharing with Tate and Eliot a belief in the value of little magazines as a means by which literary and cultural traditions

may be advanced, Dudek ends with the optimistic conclusion that "they promise quietly to create a vital literature of salutary value for this country before they run their course."[10] Five years later in 1963, Dudek's optimism was replaced by the conviction that the promise had not been fulfilled. The growing number of little magazines after 1960 seemed to him to indicate a general trend toward mediocrity and imprecision in Canadian poetry and criticism.[11]

In the second article, which provides both historical and critical information about the nature of the new magazines of the early 1960's, Frank Davey stresses the boldness with which the little magazine editors make their views public.[12] It was perhaps this very boldness and lack of discipline which so incensed Louis Dudek. Davey suggests that the real distinguishing feature of the little magazine is not its willingness to publish material refused by larger commercial magazines, but rather that the little magazines are published by "engaged writers, not by semi-interested onlookers."[13] He goes on to state:

> Whereas the commercial magazine or glossy-paged quarterly usually reflects one man's desire to be an editor, or a group's wish that their town, university, or whatever, have a "literary mag" the little magazine nearly always reflects genuine activity and interest.[14]

The Vancouver magazine Tish, established in 1960, is cited as an example of a magazine which was born of a group of engaged writers "charged with literary energy that seems continually overflowing into and out of their mimeographed pages."[15] Where Davey sees "evidence of such energy [as]

the prime criterion for judging [the magazine's] value,"[16] Dudek sees it as undisciplined exuberance which detracts from the magazine's potential to foster new and vital literature. Even though both critics agree on the value of the little magazine to the development of modern poetry, they disagree strongly about the methods by which their purpose should be achieved. Such polemics illustrate the fact that while the tendency in articles written about magazines as a literary force is toward historical generalization, there is nevertheless a frequent note of disagreement about how they should define the role of the poet and explain the function of poetry.

Davey goes on to discuss the merits and deficiencies of the magazines of the early Sixties: Moment, Mountain, Evidence, Cataract, Tish and Motion, indicating their respective editorial policies on the basis of the two or three numbers which had appeared by the summer of 1962. He concludes with the observation that to serve its purpose "a little magazine must be either bold or redundant . . . an affable little magazine cannot help but be worthless."[17]

The most cogent and detailed of the three articles in The Making Of Modern Poetry In Canada is Gnarowski's "The Role Of The Little Magazines In The Development Of Poetry In English In Montreal."[18] By discussing the manner in which the little magazines reflect the literary movements of the Twenties and Forties in Montreal, Gnarowski deals with several of the most influential publications, particularly

Preview, First Statement and Northern Review. He suggests that with the merger of Preview and First Statement into Northern Review, we note:

> . . . a very definite movement away from the wider scope and the free-wheeling policies of the older little magazines, and a corresponding concentration of editorial power in smaller and smaller groupings and increasingly tighter cliques [which] culminated in such purely personal ventures as Dudek's Delta.[19]

An awareness of this type of development referred to previously in the discussion of the introduction to the articles under review, allows him to go beyond the superficial, historical circumstances surrounding the life of the little magazines toward a more universal understanding of the growth of the magazine as a literary phenomenon. Although much of the historical information provided by Dudek is repeated here, there is an additional attempt to synthesize the information into a theory of the unique function that the little magazine has performed in Canada. In Gnarowski's view:

> . . . the significant thing about these little magazines is that they have not only performed the functions which are expected of such publications; but have gone, because of the peculiar circumstances of Canadian poetry in the last thirty years, beyond the routine services expected of advance guard periodicals.[20]

The unique services performed by the magazines are a result of the theory that "a little magazine in Canada was invariably destined to function as a national magazine . . . and as a consequence the influence of such magazines has tended to be uncommonly large."[21] This is perhaps not so true now that there are numerous magazines of all kinds

available, but during the 1940's when the majority of creative writing in Canada was published by three or four magazines, the statement is credible. It is doubtful, however, whether the national responsibility of performing "the task of liason"[22] between small interested literary groups was as unique or as effective as Gnarowski suggests. Little magazines, regardless of their vogue or numbers, have traditionally served that purpose. Obviously not all have had national significance but it is only in retrospect that a unique role in this regard can be attributed to the magazines of Montreal which at the time were really parochial ventures. John Sutherland, in fact, continually attempted to give First Statement a national scope without success. He proposed that, through agents in Vancouver and Toronto, First Statement "groups" be formed as "a logical outcome of the magazine to foster Canadianism and Canadian literature."[23] Too idealistic perhaps to succeed; the fact is that the magazine could not generate enough enthusiasm outside of Montreal to support such groups. The editorial board, however, included Lois Darroch as literary agent in Toronto and Geoffrey Ashe as agent in Vancouver. Ashe had published one issue of Western Free Lance in September of 1942 with an editorial policy similar to that of First Statement. When he heard of First Statement's appearance he and Sutherland decided to combine their magazines in order to provide coast to coast representation. But although "Western Free Lance" appeared on the masthead of First Statement from then

on, the magazine was "western" in name only.

These articles have been discussed in order to show the general manner in which the little magazine has been treated by Canadian critics as well as to indicate some of the assumptions upon which the criticism is based. It will suffice to mention other critical studies which will receive further attention in subsequent chapters.

Similar historical information, particularly regarding the magazines of the Forties, can be found in Pacey's Creative Writing In Canada and the Literary History of Canada as well as Wynne Francis's "Montreal Poets Of The Forties."[24] The best account of the magazines which were published during the Twenties and Thirties is F. W. Watt's "Climate Of Unrest: Periodicals In The Twenties and Thirties."[25] This is a condensation of a chapter from his valuable thesis on "Radicalism In English Canadian Literature Since Confederation"[26] in which considerable light is thrown upon the 1930's as a significant period in the development of Canadian literature. This latter theme has been further investigated by Peter Stevens in "The Development Of Canadian Poetry Between The Wars And Its Reflection Of Social Awareness."[27] There are only two dissertations, however, which are specifically devoted to the study of the little magazine: Ringrose's "Preview: Anatomy Of A Group,"[28] and Campbell's "Raymond Souster's Direction, Contact, and Combustion."[29]

This list, exclusive of those articles regarding specific aspects of individual publications, constitutes the

body of formal criticism on the general subject of the little magazine in Canada. The purpose of the present study will be to expand upon this minimal amount of information through an analysis of the important little magazines which appeared between 1936 and 1966 from the perspective of what they reveal as a whole about the changing attitudes toward the role of the poet and the function of poetry. From this it is hoped that a better understanding of the evolution of the Canadian poet's attitude toward his art and his role as an artist during a most significant period in the development of modern poetry may be achieved.

Ten magazines will be studied in the following chapters. New Frontier was established in 1936 as a monthly publication under the editorship of Leo Kennedy and Dorothy Livesay. It was intended to provide a forum for the radical, left wing attitudes which had become prevalent in the Thirties and it was primarily Marxist in ideology. New Frontier was published regularly for a period of only eighteen months, the last issue appearing in October of 1937, but its importance as an outlet for left wing poetry, short stories and social criticism is significant because of the insights into the radical literary ideas which it provides. Dorothy Livesay was also instrumental in the establishment of Contemporary Verse, the quarterly which Alan Crawley edited from the Vancouver area between 1941 and 1952. The magazine was the first genuine Canadian little magazine both in inspiration and policy and it provided first publication to

many of the poets who later became well known and influential during the Forties and Fifties. Contemporary Verse provides the first indication of the resurgence of literary activity and the new exchange of ideas which characterized the Forties and was most visible in Montreal with the appearance of Preview and the group of writers it represented and those who were associated with First Statement. Patrick Anderson began Preview in 1942 and John Sutherland, after being refused membership in the Preview group, began First Statement later the same year. Both magazines were published monthly until 1945 when Preview was absorbed by First Statement and Sutherland changed its name to Northern Review. It was during this period as well (1943-1946) that Raymond Souster and William Goldberg published Direction sporadically from their various air-force postings in the Maritimes. Northern Review, however, illustrates the change in literary attitudes which were occurring in Canada between 1945 and 1956. Sutherland's increasing conservatism and his reluctance to publish avante-garde and unknown poets in his quarterly led Souster and Dudek to establish Contact in 1952. Contact, which appeared about four times a year until 1954, introduced many contemporary American poets to Canadian readers and was seriously concerned with the aesthetic and formal aspects of poetry as art rather than with the social function of poetry which dominated the editorial policy of the other magazines under consideration here. Wanting a less restrictive critical point of view, Aileen Collins along with Louis

Dudek, established CIV/n magazine which appeared seven times during 1953-54. It was several years after Contact and CIV/n ceased publication that Souster and Dudek began their most personal magazines in 1957. Souster's Combustion (1957-1960) maintained a similar editorial policy to that of Contact and helped to fill the space left for American writers after Cid Corman discontinued Origin in 1956. Dudek, on the other hand, never very sympathetic to the American experimentalists or the beat poets, and opposed to the mythopoeic aesthetic which had gained popularity in Canada during the Fifties, established Delta (1957-1966) in which he attempted to restore interest in "relevant" subject matter and the social function of poetry.

The method of evaluating these magazines will be to study their critical attitudes by means of a careful consideration of their editorial policies and the critical articles which supported them. This will allow a comparison to be drawn between the publications, from which definitions of their various attitudes toward poetry and the role of the poet will emerge. Following this a study of the Canadian poetry published in the magazines will suggest the degree to which these critical attitudes are borne out in the creative writing which represents them. Emphasis will be placed upon the themes which are evident in the poems and the various styles which they employ. From this it will be possible to achieve an overview of how the Canadian writer's attitude toward the role of the poet and the function of

poetry has evolved. It will also be possible to determine the extent to which the little magazines have been influential in the development of modern Canadian poetry. Finally the study will provide an understanding of the ideas which were responsible for this development and a clearer awareness of what the Canadian poetic in the thirty years between the first issue of New Frontier and the last issue of Delta has been.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

[1]Eli Mandel, Contexts of Canadian Criticism (Chicago, 1971), p. 17.

[2]Michael Gnarowski, "The Little Magazines," The Making Of Modern Poetry In Canada, Dudek and Gnarowski, eds. (Toronto: Ryerson, 1967), p. 203.

[3]Gnarowski, p. 204.

[4]Alan Crawley, "editor's note," Contemporary Verse 4 (June 1942), p. 3.

[5]Louis Dudek, "The Role Of The Little Magazines In Canada," The Making Of Modern Poetry In Canada, pp. 205-212. Reprinted from Canadian Forum (July 1958).

[6]Dudek, p. 206.

[7]Dudek, p. 206.

[8]Dudek, p. 207.

[9]Dudek, pp. 211-212.

[10]Dudek, p. 212.

[11]Louis Dudek, "The Little Magazine," English Poetry In Quebec: Proceedings Of The Foster Poetry Conference, October 12-14, 1963. John Glassco, ed. (Montreal: McGill University Press 1965), p. 59.

[12]Frank Davey, "Anything but Reluctant: Canada's Little Magazines," Canadian Literature, No. 13 (Summer 1962). Reprinted in The Making of Modern Poetry In Canada, pp. 222-227.

[13]Davey, p. 223.

[14]Davey, p. 223.

[15]Davey, p. 223.

[16]Davey, p. 223.

[17]Davey, p. 227.

[18]Michael Gnarowski, "The Role of 'Little Magazines' in The Development of Poetry in English in Montreal," Culture, XXIV, No. 3 (September 1963). Reprinted in The Making of Modern Poetry In Canada, pp. 212-222.

[19]Gnarowski, p. 220.

[20]Gnarowski, p. 212.

[21]Gnarowski, p. 213.

[22]Gnarowski, p. 213.

[23]John Sutherland, "Editorial," First Statement, I, 13.

[24]Wynne Francis, "Montreal Poets Of The Forties," Canadian Literature, No. 14 (Autumn 1962), pp. 21-34.

[25]F. W. Watt, "Climate of Unrest: Periodicals In The Twenties and Thirties," Canadian Literature, No. 12 (Spring 1962), pp. 15-27.

[26]Peter Stevens, "The Development of Canadian Poetry between The Wars and its Reflection Of Social Awareness," Diss. University of Saskatchewan, 1968.

[27]F. W. Watt, "Radicalism In English Canadian Poetry Since Confederation," Diss. University of Toronto, 1957.

[28]Christopher Ringrose, "Preview: Anatomy of A Group," Diss. University of Alberta, 1969.

[29]Robert Campbell, "Raymond Souster's Direction, Contact, and Combustion," Diss. University of New Brunswick, 1969.

CHAPTER II

LEFT WING POLITICS AND PROLETARIAN POETRY DURING THE 1930's: THE NEW FRONTIER ETHOS

In April of 1936 New Frontier magazine was begun with a design to "acquaint the Canadian public with the work of those writers who are expressing a positive reaction to the social scene; and to serve as an open forum for all shades of progressive opinion."[1] As much political as literary in concept, the magazine represented the widespread left wing ideals of the period by means of social commentary, literary criticism, poetry, and prose. Since the decade of the Thirties was a time when politics and poetry were very closely related, it is necessary to understand the social, cultural and political milieu which gave rise to the publication of New Frontier before the magazine can be approached from a literary point of view. The political attitudes of the editors had a strong influence upon the type of poetry and criticism that they published and thus it is important to give particular attention to the part played by radical politics during the depression years.

Besides the inception of New Frontier, 1936 also saw the beginning of the Canadian Poetry Magazine[2] as well as the publication of New Provinces,[3] and W. E. Collin's The White Savannahs.[4] At the same time the Spanish Civil War was at its bloodiest height and the Nazis were on the rise in

Europe. With these events in mind, it is not difficult to understand F. W. Watt's metaphor which views the Thirties as "an intense magnetic field that reflected [the writers'] courses leftward in varying degrees."[5] The well known aesthetic and intellectual revolt led by A. J. M. Smith and F. R. Scott during the 1920's had continued into the 1930's with the addition of a new emphasis upon politics. The left wing writers' insistence that poetry be fused with propaganda meant that Canadian poets during the Thirties began for the first time to define both their role as artists and the function of their poetry in revolutionary terms. It is in this context that an investigation of the relationship between left wing politics and proletarian poetry during the 1930's becomes necessary as a background to the first part of the present study.

In discussing the history of Canadian literature from 1882 to 1952, Desmond Pacey observes that "periods of intense literary activity were also periods of intense ideological activity."[6] He goes on to say that:

> When convictions are passionately held and debated, literature will flourish. It will not necessarily directly reflect or express the social and political debate, but the very existence of that debate creates an atmosphere in which literature can live.[7]

The generalization seems fundamentally true but it is interesting to note that Pacey does not include the depression years in his survey. He looks upon the 1930's as a period as barren for literature as it was for agriculture, industry, and economics. This is an unusual conclusion in light of his

thesis since these years of vigorous political and social debate and passionately held revolutionary convictions were also years of intense literary activity. The fact that he bypasses the 1930's, however, may be because very little first rate literature was produced from the turmoil. Although the writing of the Thirties expressed the social and political attitudes more directly than any other period of recent history, the revolutionary political atmosphere was one in which good writing seldom flourished. And this is particularly true of the poetry. Pacey's thesis holds in so far as a great deal of literary activity accompanied the political and social debate, but it fails with regard to the excellence of the literature that was produced. With poetry and politics, if not with finances, the Thirties were years when quantity took precedence over quality.

The collapse of the capitalist economy gave rise to renewed interest in radical political solutions to the problems with which society found itself involved. But the need for reform was seen by certain groups long before the depression settled on the country. The failure of the Winnipeg general strike in 1919 created the kind of radical political thinking that made the 1920's a period of unrest as well. The radicals were split into "revolutionary and evolutionary camps, the former leading to Tim Buck's communism, the latter into Woodsworth's socialism, The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and The League For Social Reconstruction."[8] So Canada was stirring in a socialist direction when the depression finally

arrived to galvanize the country with social conviction. On the simplest level, the understanding that formed was that since capitalism had obviously failed, some form of socialism or communism was the natural alternative. The ethos of the Thirties, then, became one of left wing politics. Economic and political theories which had previously been of interest only to a small minority became acceptable to a large number of people from almost every walk of life.[9]

No one was affected more by this spirit of reform than the poets. They looked upon what was happening in Canada as first-hand evidence of what was happening around the world. Fascism was gaining strength in Europe and the working classes were facing oppression on all sides. The villains at home were the industrialists who were supported by the capitalist federal government. The victims were the people of the working class. For the poets, as for the "progressive" politicians, the remedy seemed most readily found in the principles of Marxian socialism whereby political power could be placed in the hands of the oppressed majority—the industrial workers and the farmers.

Political action toward this end was being taken. The Socialist Party of British Columbia elected its first member of parliament from the city of Vancouver in 1930.[10] United farmers organizations in Alberta and Manitoba joined those of Saskatchewan in endorsing the establishment of the Cooperative Commonwealth State and in May of 1932, labor party M.P.'s J. S. Woodsworth, William Irvine, A. A. Heaps,

and Angus McInnes, among others, met in Ottawa to plan the formation of a "Commonwealth Party."[11] It seemed that the farmer and labor interests were being united, and the formation of the C.C.F. Party at the Regina Convention of 1933 finalized that impression in the minds of the writers.

Progressive socialist activity was evident among other factions as well. A large group of university professors and other intellectuals formed the League For Social Reconstruction in 1931 modelled on the British Fabian Society. Their aim was to do whatever they could in terms of education and research to advance the cause of socialism. The L.S.R. provided the intellectual leadership for radical socialists that F. H. Underhill saw lacking as late as 1929.[12] Some religious groups were joining the socialist crusade as well. The Toronto Conference of the United Church, which was Canada's largest Protestant group, made it a special point of their gathering to condemn the evils of capitalism.[13]

All of this ferment made obvious the fact that a profound political and social revaluation was taking place in Canada. The question that the writers faced had to do with what their role as artists should be under these extraordinary circumstances. The answer they found involved a revaluation of their aesthetic principles which resulted in the conclusion that art should be made to serve the political cause. F. W. Watt has phrased this attitude succinctly:

> Every artist was obliged to consider his position and to justify his activity in the face of the rudest and strongest demands that art take a direct social role . . . the communist

challenge for total social commitment left no doubt, and the artist was impelled to respond or to search out (explicitly or otherwise) higher and more profound justifications for his existence.[14]

It is for this reason that poets, and intellectuals in general, developed a genuine revolutionary aesthetic for the first time in Canada during the 1930's. To serve its political purpose, poetry often became left wing and revolutionary. This meant that art would be sacrificed to propaganda and that content would take precedence over form. The very fact that so many writers came to this conclusion indicates the intensity with which the revolutionary spirit was felt. The new proletarian poetic can, therefore, be seen as a symptom of the strength of the conviction that radical social and political reform was necessary to the future of Canada.

It is clear, then, that politicians and intellectuals of the left saw the depression not only as a time of suffering and frustration but also as a time of opportunity and hope. The poetry and the social criticism of the Thirties reveal the ironic consequences of this attitude. At a time when the fortunes of the working man were at their lowest ebb, he was transformed into a hero. Political movements formed on his behalf and his problems became prime copy for the newspapers and magazines. Although the negative repercussions of the depression were widespread, it is important to point out that the depression also had the positive effect of creating a political and cultural dialectic which gave everyone a heightened awareness of the dangers inherent in complacency and social conservatism. For the poets, it provided a cause

which gave their work a specific direction although it destroyed a great deal of their originality for a time. In 1928, an anonymous writer lamented in The Canadian Mercury that Canadians had no gospel and that everywhere "they are searching and wavering, losing one ideal after another, waiting vainly for the stimulus which would be provided by some intuition into some combination of writers, poets, and all people with the vision of a socially progressive Canada."[15] Two years later the gospel he asked for had materialized and, by the middle of the decade, it had become a revolutionary force. In her poem "Epilogue," Dorothy Livesay expressed this strange new optimism with passion and conviction:

> O new found land! Sudden release of lungs,
> Our own breath blows the world! Our veins, unbound-
> Set free the fighting heart. We speak with tongues-
> This struggle is our miracle new found.[16]

With this burst of revolutionary idealism, Dorothy Livesay is not speaking simply for herself. She is giving voice to an attitude that may well have applied to most left wing political thinkers and intellectuals. She was one herself, and as such, she is expressing a cultural mood.

This is not to say that the poetry was generally optimistic. Most frequently it was a poetry of protest which attempted to reveal the condition of the working man and the soldier in the most realistic terms possible. Capitalism and fascism were seen as the black-cloaked villains who had brought poverty and degradation to the masses. In this way the poetry was in the main stream of socialist, and particularly communist, feeling which was flowing through the country.

Some examples of this kind of poetry which appeared in contemporary periodicals and journals show just how completely the writers were taken with their subject. The themes expressed with starkly unpoetic explicitness in the following are repeated by other poets with surprising consistency:

> The workman is no longer
> Free, to hew both wood and
> Rock, and bend the
> Brass and iron to
> His will.
> The serf of wheel, and cogs, and
> The ear;
> O God, remember us when pride of
> Artisan has turned to
> Shackled fear.
>
> The money changers lust, on
> Mart and marketplace, has
> Made them mad upon their
> Gods of gold
> And gain.
> The gold grows, oh how dim, and
> All their gain is turned
> To loss.
> Lest we forget O God, let us
> Let us remember still that pelf and power
> Are dross.[17]

A sonnet sequence by Helen Geddes which appeared in the previous month's Canadian Forum stressed the same theme in equally bad poetry:

> The power that bends the nations to its will
> The economic force, the belly's need,
> Waited upon by fear and sloth and greed,
> Dreams of the garden and the city still:
> And these it follows steadfastly, until
> The shapes t'ward which drove the stubborn seed
> Harden at last into the monstrous deed
> That surfeits earth with fraud and evil will.[18]

The Canadian journals of literature and social criticism welcomed contributions from English and American "revolutionary"

writers as well as those from Canadians. During this period the fetters of nationalism and chauvinism, which characterized the so-called "maple-leaf school" of Canadian writing, began to loosen and it is often difficult to distinguish the national origin of a poem from its contents. Maxwell Bodenheim, one of the better known American proletarian poets, contributed "Southern Labour Organizer" to the September 1936 issue of New Frontier. Its characteristic tone is consistent with the Canadian poems of similar inspiration:

> . . . This conflict cannot stop
> Until we raise a thousand cries.
>
> The landlord's whips and guns will drop
> When we can answer them with size.
> An hundred men signed every week,
> This we must pledge—a murmur spread
> From hearts resolved to act, to speak
> Protect the living, avenge—the dead.[19]

The battle lines seemed simplistically clear to the poets who had decided that it was their artistic duty to be champions of the proletariat. The better writers, however, saw the deeper implications of the social dilemma. Pointing out the problems faced by the working man and condemning the fact that they had occurred was one thing, but understanding the nature of his psychology was another. The fact is, that having worked and lived in the pre-depression years, most working men were capitalists at heart. What they lacked was the steady work and the wages which would improve their material well being. Unlike the poets, the intellectuals, and the politicians, the working man could not afford to be idealistic.

A. M. Klein's poem, "The Soiree Of Velvel Kleinburger" which was first published in Canadian Forum in 1932,[20] suggests that there is nothing noble about poverty. Velvel Kleinburger works in poverty in the Montreal garment industry and his recreation after work (when he is not fantasizing about wealth and power) is primarily whoring and gambling. The poet attempts to tell Velvel that he is wrong to think only of material goods and creature comforts. But Velvel has no patience with the poet's views and he replies:

> . . . after days in dusty factories
> Among machines that manufacture madness
> I have no stomach for these subtleties
> About rewards and everlasting gladness;
> And having met your over-rated dawns,
> Together with milkmen watering their milk,
> And having trickled sweat according to a scale
> of wages,
> Sewing buttons to warm the navels of your
> Business sages,
> I have brought home at dusk
> My several bones, my much flailed husk.[21]

Velvel deals in hard realities. He is not the idealistic social revolutionary that the poet would like him to be. Even when he is dreaming of a better future his dreams are selfish and materialistic:

> . . . I will achieve
> An easier living and a less scrawny life
> And not forever will the foreman have
> The aces up his sleeve,
> But someday I will place the lucky bet.[22]

The point is, of course, that the poet in the poem is concerned with an idea of what the proletarian philosophy should be rather than with what it is in actuality. And during the 1930's this was a shortcoming of left wing politicians as well as of the poets who shared this ideology. Another of the

ironies of these years was the fact that in the almost hysterical fervor to improve the lot of the working man by joining with him in a "united front" against capitalism and fascist oppression, the desires of the working man were forgotten. As James H. Gray observes in The Winter Years:

> Those who threw themselves into the struggle to remake the world were those who lived above the storm. Those who were most concerned, the unemployed on relief, backed away from combat to become arguing spectators on the sidelines . . . In the (Manitoba) provincial election campaign of 1932, when there were more than 20,000 men and women on relief in Winnipeg, campaign material piled up in the offices of the Independent Labour Party, because there were not sufficient volunteers to deliver it . . . Having been freed from the compulsion to provide for their own basic needs, the unemployed could afford to take a second look at their environment. It contained no Bastille that cried out to be stormed . . .[29]

Despite the sincere wish on the part of the poets and the left wing political thinkers to bring about a new and better life for the working man, the "united front" was a myth that never materialized. The literary and political agitators were indeed "above the storm." The poetry of protest became, to a large extent, a poetry of Marxist slogans and propaganda which now frequently leaves the impression that it was produced by political dilettantes who found it fashionable to side with the proletariat. The distance between the intellectuals and the real problems of the working class is described with scathing, though perhaps exaggerated poignancy by Gerald S. Graham:

> I remember the period well. Cynicism became the sign of maturity and originality; the denigration of empire and the condemnation of militarists became fashionable exercises in which university intellectuals took a leading part. Historians devoted themselves to the Whig or liberal interpretation of Canadian history, recounting the glorious story of Canada's liberation from the silken meshes of British Imperialism.

> Such was the negative character and tone of Canadian nationalism in the pre-war years. The "thirties" were flaccid, ineffective, and sick years of good intentions, when the evil peril of Naziism could be reduced to common room proportions, and when bustling, bright, and provocative scholars could seek bubble reputations by intellectual exercises that ignored the world the locusts were already devouring.[24]

This kind of bitterness suggests how strongly some people felt about the superficial nature of "bandwagon" sloganeering. It also indicates how widespread such practices had become. Speaking of the proletarian movement in English poetry during the same period, C. Day Lewis makes a similar observation about the socialist bandwagon syndrome. It could be applied to Canadian poetry just as well:

> In estimating the social importance of this movement, we must be careful to discount the temporary and fictitious impetus it received from the economic slump of the period, and to remember that the literary world is no less prone to fashion than any other. Its desire at this time for a wider contact with the world as a whole coincided with the coming into fashion of Soviet Russia as a subject for intellectual discussion, and we shall be right in thinking that the connection between the two is not above suspicion.[25]

There were many critics who complained that the left wing political movements were also being controlled by men who were "above the storm." The League For Social Reconstruction, composed largely of university intellectuals, was instrumental in the birth of the C.C.F. which was originally a doctrinaire socialist party based on the abolition of capitalism and a transfer of political power into the hands of the working class. The gap between their philosophy embodied in the Regina Manifesto of 1933 and the political implementation of that philosophy through a union of farmers and labour is a main reason why the C.C.F. failed to gain

national success as a party.

There were complaints, then, that the C.C.F. brand of socialism, even in 1936, was too idealistic and too doctrinaire. Even though the C.C.F. represented the working man's cause, there were very few workers in the national leadership. The natural question became: how can a worker's party be administered effectively by Rhodes Scholars who are insensitive to the needs of the people they represent? The danger seen was that by "plugging for socialism pure and undefiled" the national leadership would separate itself from the rank and file.[26] This is another irony which reveals as much about the shaky foundations of the C.C.F. as it does about the real attitude of the working class. The farmers and laborers were, in fact, not essentially socialist thinkers at all. The complexity of the C.C.F.'s position comes to light with grim humour—the dilemma of a socialist party that is hesitant to call itself socialist for fear of frightening off the working man whom it supposedly represents. Despite the tenacity with which the intellectuals held to their ideals, in the politics of the 1930's, the "united front" was a hollow slogan.

What support farm and labor groups did give the left wing movements was given, as Gray and others have suggested,[27] out of frustration and opportunism rather than out of devotion to the socialist ideal. This was apparently even true of the teachers, who, near the bottom of the economic scale, and disgusted with the liberals and conservatives, "turned to the handiest alternative. In Saskatchewan that handy alternative

was the newly organized Cooperative Commonwealth Federation."[28]

In Alberta, the handy alternative was the Social Credit Party. In 1935 the Social Credit Party swept into power in Alberta largely because of the messianic ethos of William Aberhart. The rationale behind Social Credit went as follows:

> The economic system must be reformed. Socialism was not the answer, since it would mean still further centralization of economic and political power. Monetary reform was the answer because it could destroy the mechanism by which economics was being measured and by which the material well being and the freedom of the individual were being diminished. Monetary reform was merely a means toward the end of establishing a new society in which human beings would be free to develop their own individuality in a way that had never been possible before.[29]

Even though it was anything but a socialist movement, the fact that the party succeeded in gaining the overwhelming support of a broad cross-section of the population of Alberta, led other more extreme left wing sympathisers to take it seriously. The C.C.F. was shocked at the sudden success of Social Credit and they looked closely to see how it had been accomplished. The desperation with which the C.C.F. was trying to reconcile its socialism with the desires of the people is apparent in the fact that they showed some sympathy with Social Credit at first. Social Credit, it seemed, had generated the kind of "popular front" in Alberta that the C.C.F. had been trying to establish for several years. A writer in <u>New Frontier</u> in 1937, condemned the disparate socialist groups for their failure to recognize what the working class wanted and their inability to gain the kind of support shown for Social Credit:

> . . . this very fact of a broad movement, regardless of the value of its grinding economic theory, shows that here was a people on the march to achieve a better standard of living!
>
> It is here that the socialist forces, the C.C.F., Communist, Labour Party, U.F.A., are isolated from each other and from people generally and failed to perceive this great subjective factor. They underestimated the intelligence and spirit of the population. The Social Credit leaders were dubbed fascists, their economic theory impossible, their members mentally like sheep.[30]

The socialist idealism was not paying off in terms of popular support. Through lack of organization, and because of the distance between the ideals of the intellectuals who controlled the socialist movement and the realities of the working people who made up party membership, the protest movement produced a great deal of political and literary rhetoric but little in terms of effective results.

A notable literary exception to this conclusion is, perhaps, Anne Marriott's The Wind Our Enemy which appeared in 1939.[31] In the poem she treats the plight of the dust-bowl farmers with insight and sensitivity. One reason for her success undoubtedly lies in the fact that she remains regional and specific in her outlook. Her treatment of the drought-ridden prairies does not carry over into aspirations for world wide proletarian revolution and she does not see the farmer as a representative of a class which will someday come to power. Instead she gives us poems which present images rather than preach sermons; she shows that the suffering and courage of these people whose economic troubles have been compounded by the dust storms, were important in themselves rather than as evidence of international oppression and capitalist bungling. The speaker in the poem listens to the political news on the

radio which informs him of the events in the outside world: "insurgents march in Spain / Japs bomb Chinese / Airliner lost," and this leads him to rationalize that "Maybe we're not as badly off as some- / Maybe there'll be a war and we'll get paid to fight." But in the end the only wish of the poverty stricken farmer is to "forget politics, / Forget the wind, our enemy!" This man is no revolutionary. He has his own private war. He lives from day to day and thinks of rain that never comes, and, instead of looking beyond the dry, infertile present toward the better future which is bound to arrive, he looks at the reality around him and sees only:

> Wind
> in a lonely laughterless shrill game
> with broken wash-boiler, bucket without
> a handle, Russian thistle, throwing up
> sections of soil.

And there is no idealism in his answers to the final question:

> God, will it never rain? What about
> those clouds out west? No, that's just dust, as
> thick
> and stifling now as winter underwear.
> No rain, no crop, no feed, no faith only
> wind.

One of the characteristics of the poetry of the 1930's which is at variance with the left wing politics, is its refusal to compromise its ideals. Whereas the political parties varied their social stances in order to accomodate changing public opinion, the writing became more doctrinaire in the last half of the decade. The term "left wing" is at best a vague description of the political tendencies of a particular group. Obviously, radicalism must always be under-

stood in terms of relativity and degree. But after 1934 it seems that even the poets who had taken up the proletarian principles of the left became unsure of what Canadian socialism represented. And this is no wonder since the C.C.F., frantic for public support, after the Social Credit victory in Alberta, swung sharply to the right and attempted to dissociate itself from the word "socialism." The Communists, on the other hand, were attacking the C.C.F. for their failure of nerve while bending their own position to suit the variable winds blowing from Moscow and the changing Communist fortunes in Germany and Spain. To complicate matters even more, the Bennett government's "New Deal" policies moved the Conservatives so far to the left that they became a reform party. Frank Scott's rather baffled account of Bennett's proposals for social reform is extremely enlightening not only because of its comprehensive listing of the aims of the New Deal, but also because of Scott's synergistic personality which allowed him to speak for several factions at once. Besides being national secretary of the C.C.F. party, he was one of the original members of the League For Social Reconstruction who had drafted the Regina Manifesto. Scott was also a university professor, an expert in constitutional law, and a well known Canadian poet. For these reasons, his puzzlement at the Conservative turn to the left is significant and deserves to be quoted at length:

> The [Conservative] Party has never professed a belief in state interference with business, but under Mr. Bennett, who was appointed leader in 1927 and who held office from 1930 to 1935, the party program took such a sudden shift to the

left that it made the Liberals appear far more conservative than the Conservatives. A glance at the Dominion Statutes of 1933-35 will reveal how active was the conservative leader in the promotion of social reform and state control of the economy. Mr. Bennett nationalized the radio, created a central bank, established a national system of marketing boards for primary products, pegged the price of wheat and placed the whole wheat export trade under a wheat board, negotiated a St. Lawrence Waterways Treaty with the United States, entered into the Ottawa agreements, initiated the 1935 reciprocity agreement with Washington, extended the criminal law to prohibit unfair trade practices, created a trade and industry commission to enforce the new prohibitions, and adopted Dominion legislation to deal with unemployment insurance, minimum wages, maximum hours, and the weekly day of rest. In the face of this tour de force it is difficult to know how to describe the political philosophy of the Conservative Party in Canada today.[32]

Such sweeping moves toward social reform make it easy to see why the traditional parties of the left and the poets associated with them found it difficult to define their position. The fact that the Conservatives were voted out of office in the federal elections of 1935 however, suggests that such extreme reforms were not really acceptable to the average man. Canadians preferred a more moderate rate of change and, as Gray, speaking as a representative of the "oppressed majority," observes: "We destroyed R. B. Bennett, repudiated his New Deal, and then quietly and slowly and perversely enacted everything he proposed into the laws of the land."[33]

The question of who and what the radical poets were supposed to be supporting then, became difficult to answer in terms of Canadian socialist politics. Rather than give up the humanist ideals which fostered their protest movement on behalf of the proletariat, they concentrated more and more upon the broader aspects of the international struggle for

socialism. If party lines had become vague at home, there was no doubt about the dangers of fascism abroad.

Part of the reason for this renewed concern with the perils of fascism was the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The writers saw it as the physical counterpart of their ideological struggle. Suddenly, the forces of fascism and social democracy were meeting head on in battle. The December 1936 number of New Frontier was a special issue on Spain and included a number of replies by well known Canadians to the query "Where I Stand On Spain." The diverse range of opinion clearly shows the extent to which the country was divided between left and right wing attitudes toward the international situation. Similar attention was paid to the international crisis in the more conservative publications such as Canadian Forum and the academic journals, but New Frontier, with its fundamentally Marxist editorial policy became increasingly radical in its views. Its pages become shrill with the voices of fascist witch-hunters. The action of the R.C.M.P. in dealing with the "On-To-Ottawa" trekkers at Regina for example, is seen as evidence of the ruthlessness of the federal government's "storm-troopers." The Duplessis government's imposition of the "padlock law" in Quebec is given similarly sensational treatment[34] as are the Fascist activities in British Columbia.[35] The general tendency (and not without justification in some instances) is to see fascists everywhere, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church and the major newspapers such as Le Devoir, The Toronto

Star, and The Globe And Mail. The Montreal Standard comes under severe editorial criticism in the January 1937 issue of New Frontier because it had reported positively on Franco and the Rev. W. X. Brian S.J. who had referred to him as "a visionary, a liberator and an idealist."[36]

The poetry as well as the social criticism of New Frontier is notable for its insistence upon social commitment and revolutionary zeal. It is international in theme and the individual struggles of the Canadian people are often swallowed up in the hope for a world wide revolution. The poets held that responsibility should be felt for every worker, everywhere. A. M. Stephen's cynical little poem published in a 1936 issue of the magazine expresses this attitude clearly:

HOW ARE YOU?

"How are you, this morning?"
I questioned the man.
He replied:
"In Japan, a bullet has shattered my brain.
In China, the bayonets have pierced my side.
In America, I am crying for bread at my mother's
knee.
I am rotting in Canadian gaols.
In Europe, I am driven by hunger and despair to the
red shambles of another war.
Thank you for asking.
I might be better than I am . . . this morning!"[37]

By May of 1937 when the defeat of Franco seemed less certain than the revolutionaries at first believed, Stephen could still see the possibility of victory, even if it was to be established upon the graves of martyrs sometime in the future:

. . . Tonight, in lanes of old Madrid
Red death is arm-in-arm with hate-
Hate of the creeping Fascist horde,

The beast that crouches at the gate.

Though on the twisted Nazi cross
They nail those hands that were so brave,
The flower of liberty will spring
Triumphant from the martyr's grave.[38]

New Frontier also identified itself closely with Communism. Although its editorial policy was to remain non-partisan, there can be no doubt of its Marxist literary and political stance. Though it supported the C.C.F. in principle, for example, it did not support it in actuality because by 1936 the party had moderated its social platform in order to gain wider national acceptance. E. A. Beder, in an article entitled "A Basis For A People's Party," attacked the C.C.F. because it no longer shared the ideals of the radical left and had "bogged down in its principles set by the Regina Manifesto."[39] Graham Spry, who was then editor of the more middle of the road Canadian Forum as well as one of the executives of the C.C.F. party, attacked New Frontier in return for its blatant Communism. His comments are doubly revealing since they show how far the C.C.F. position had shifted to the right of its original position as well as showing how far left New Frontier actually was. He suggests that New Frontier and the Communist Party both take as their platform an opposition to fascism and war. This, he says, is true of any democratic party and that without a specific plan and specific issues, the views of the magazine and the Communist Party are without strength or credibility. There is some truth in his belief about what the magazine's political stance had become:

> The "revised tactical line" has created a new form of political animal—the "United Frontier"—a sort of political centaur, half kicking horse, half a smiling, engratiating human. The landscape is dotted with these galloping figures—The League Against War And Fascism, The Friends Of The Soviet Union, a whole variety of similar figures, and now in the "cultural" field, New Frontier.[40]

The significant implication in these remarks is that New Frontier and the left wing political and literary attitudes it represented had become a slave to their own ideology. Anything less than democratic social revolution was understood to be a move in the direction of tyranny and fascism. As a result, the majority of the social criticism becomes negative and, to a great extent, based upon the debunking of less "progressive" ideals and institutions.

This ideological slavery is also apparent in the social poetry published in New Frontier, and the utilitarian purpose on which it is based often destroyed it as art. During the 1930's poetry became fused with politics and the result was frequently sentimental or hysterical propaganda which supported peace and freedom and opposed war and oppression. That so many poets joined the proletarian movement, however, is proof that the depression years were responsible for creating a new sense of commitment in the mind of the Canadian artist which made it necessary for him to define his social role in the revolution and thereby justify his existence. Despite the many negative aspects of the 1930's, there is virtue in the fact that poets and politicians alike were forced to look closely at their society and see, perhaps as never before, what an imperfect and fragile

structure it really was.

This background information regarding the general relationship between poetry and politics during the depression years provides a more realistic approach to the poetry and literary criticism of New Frontier than would otherwise be possible. It is in the critical articles and reviews which appeared in the magazine that the new social role of the poet and the function of poetry are most specifically defined.

i The New Frontier Criticism

When specific attention is given to the literary criticism which was published in New Frontier, it becomes evident that the main concern of its editors and contributors was to attempt a redefinition of the social role of the poet and the function his poetry should serve. Virtually all of the literary articles in the magazine deal with this theme in some direct way. The preceding discussion of the close relationship between poetry and politics during this period shows that "progressivism" was considered to be as important to cultural reform as it was to political and social change. By pointing out the direction that art and artists should take in opposing outworn, reactionary aesthetic attitudes, the critics were performing their part in helping to realize the larger revolutionary goals set out as follows in the magazine's first editorial:

Never before in the history of this country has there been so much need for clear thinking and unity of action on the part of Canadian writers, artists and intellectuals as there is today. It is the hope of the editors of New Frontier that the ominous uniting of the forces of reaction will be opposed by a drawing together of the forces for progress. We hope to see those who have been sitting on the fence lining up in support of culture and civilisation; as have such middle of the road writers as Aldous Huxley, E. M. Forster, Archibald MacLeish, Ramon Fernandez and Andre Gide. If New Frontier is able to assist their progress in any way we will feel that we have more than justified our existence.[11]

The general consensus of opinion was that poetry had reached the "crossroads" of development in Canada. Poets were faced with the choice of either continuing their dependence upon the regressive tradition of romantic idealism which had come to characterize the anthologies or of breaking free from the past by attempting to write poetry which confronted the socio-political injustices affecting everyone in their contemporary world. But before "new" poetry could be written by poets who had revised their attitudes about what their artistic objectives should be, a new criticism was necessary. Several articles in New Frontier were devoted to the task of explaining the faults committed by Canadian critics and showing the ways in which they might better serve Canadian literature.

In the October 1936 issue of the magazine, Alan Calmer discussed what he considered to be the main weaknesses in Canadian poetry and criticism in an article entitled "A Hope For Canadian Poetry." By casting his argument in the form of a letter to the editor, Calmer informally attacked the inadequacies he saw in the recently published anthology, New Provinces and Collin's appreciations of the "new" poets in

The White Savannahs. By dealing with an anthology of contemporary poetry together with an anthology of contemporary criticism he is able to draw parallels between the two and thus discuss current attitudes toward poetry and criticism at the same time. Collin, he points out, has distinguished the new poetry from the old by showing how the modern poets have rejected the romantic traditions of the nineteenth century in favor of the more relevant techniques introduced by T. S. Eliot. The preface to New Provinces further indicates that the specific attempt on the part of the poets to "turn toward central social experience and vision, for which the coming of the crisis and the rise of proletarian culture are responsible"[42] puts post-war Canadian poets in the mainstream of an international movement toward proletarian poetry. Calmer understands this aesthetic attitude to be the positive aspect of the writing of the thirties and it is in this tendency that his "hope" for Canadian poetry lies. However, "the fulfillment of that hope seems to be far off"[43] for two reasons: the poetry of New Provinces is imitative and the criticism of The White Savannahs is superficial. "I get the feeling from New Provinces and The White Savannahs" he says:

> . . . that you have been largely content to take over these transformations in American and English verse at their face value, without rooting them very deeply in your own native patterns. It seems to me that you haven't dug into the varied meanings and shades of meanings which these new tendencies must have for Canadian poetry alone, or the particular relevance which Canadian poetry must have to these new ways of writing. My impression is that you have welcomed these new attitudes in an altogether uncritical fashion, that you have been inflexible and unthinking, and even smug, towards them—that you have not hammered away at them, gripping them with all your might, squeezing out of them the

sustenance which your poetic growth requires. I feel that you have adopted the new modes of literary expression almost as meekly and blindly as your predecessors imitated the tones and moods of English romantic poetry."[44]

The same is true with regard to the Canadian assimilation of the techniques of the metaphysical poets through Eliot, according to Calmer. The "fad" has been taken up whole and imposed upon a Canadian aesthetic to which it may apply in a manner much different than that of England and the United States. Canadian criticism as well, if Collin's book is representative in any way, is too mild and appreciative. In light of the imitative and derivative nature of the poetry, the criticism "should have been ruthless, clinching with the profound aspects of the subject, stabbing deep into the heart of them instead of caressing them so gently."[45] And although Calmer sees the shift in the subject matter of Canadian poetry toward a new social awareness as being a move in the proper direction, he is left with the impression that the social conviction is "very abstract and indefinite . . . [and not] rooted in the specific realities of the Canadian class struggle."[46]

As an American critic attempting to deal meaningfully with contemporary Canadian poetry and criticism of the thirties, Calmer's primary impression is that there seems to be very little evidence that the writing has been the product of a specifically Canadian ethos. He is probing for a Canadian attitude which would prove that the poets have honest and deep convictions about the relationship between their art and their society, but he finds only an imitative kind of poetry, fostered, perhaps, by a criticism which is too superficial

and appreciative to be of value in helping a more original and forceful poetry to develop. In an attempt to account for these failings, Calmer offers the following:

> From this distance, the only large reason I can see that would account for your superficial response to the new changes in writing—as well as to the old—is the ruthless nature of your literary tradition, the absence of an indigenous rock-bottom upon which you could really build; to the immaturity of your literature, resulting from your colonial dependence upon English culture and your lack of national awareness, in a spiritual sense.[47]

With such a formidable barrier of negative factors to overcome, it would appear that the "hope for Canadian poetry" is indeed meagre. The implication of Calmer's article, however, is that significant changes in the state of poetry cannot be brought about by criticism which caresses rather than bites into its subject. The need is for confrontation and challenge rather than mollifying praise.

Three months before, in the July 1936 number of New Frontier, E. K. Brown also found fault with New Provinces.[48] His attack, however, was primarily levelled at the rationale behind its publication. In the rather well known preface to the anthology, Brown saw a repudiation of its contents.[49] Although the editors observe that poetry has found the "positive direction" in the 1930's that it had so long been seeking, the preface blatantly states that the poetry in the anthology is not representative of that new positive direction because it was "written for the most part when new techniques were on trial, and when the need for a new direction was more apparent than the knowledge of what that direction would be."[50] Brown is concerned then, with what is particularly "new"

about New Provinces. "It is not unreasonable," he observes, "to inquire why these poems should be printed now. Presumably their authors are now capable, by virtue of their new social enthusiasm, of writing verse vastly more significant than those between the covers of this slight anthology."[51] F. R. Scott himself has recently indicated that New Provinces was at least five years in finding a publisher and that by the time it appeared, the poetry, which was almost all written before 1930, seemed to require some apology.[52] The value that has been attached to the preface, however, involves its general outline of the social direction that poets were taking during the depression years. A. J. M. Smith's original preface,[53] written before the cataclysmic events of the early 1930's were evident, would have been much more suitable, both to Brown and to later generations of readers. It was rejected, however, primarily because of objections raised by the anthology's best known and most traditional representative, E. J. Pratt. Smith's specific suggestions regarding the nature of the changes which were to take place in the poetry of the thirties are indeed far ranging. His main points were that the romantic, emotional exercises represented in anthologies such as W. W. Campbell's The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse and Garvin's Canadian Poets are dead because they ignore the intelligence; that Canadian critics do literature a profound disservice by pretending that such poetry is "alive" and worthwhile; that Canadian poetry should "combine colloquialism and rhetoric" in a manner already illustrated by better

writers in the United States and Britain; and that the poet must, in view of new international social problems, cease to be detached and introspective and become engaged in "events that are of vital significance to everybody."[54] Smith is prophetic in his prediction of the social circumstances which were to come and his statement of the need for a social attitude toward poetry foresaw the proletarian movement in Canadian literature which for a time found its outlet in New Frontier. This was how he viewed the situation:

> Detachment, indeed, or self-absorption is (for a time only, I hope) becoming impossible. The era of individual liberty is in eclipse. Capitalism can hardly be expected to survive the cataclysm its most interested adherents are blindly steering towards, and the artist who is concerned with the most intense of experiences must be concerned with the world situation in which, whether he likes it or not, he finds himself. For the moment at least he has something more important to do than to record his private emotions. He must try to perfect a technique that will combine power with simplicity and sympathy with intelligence so that he may play his part in developing mental and emotional attitudes that will facilitate the creation of a more practical social system.[55]

These conclusions, unpublished at the time, are echoed repeatedly in the poetry and criticism of the thirties. Although E. K. Brown would perhaps not have dealt less critically with the poetry of New Provinces, he certainly could not have disputed the rationale behind the book had Smith's preface been included. The significance of New Provinces is clear. It stands in relation to previous anthologies of Canadian poetry as New Frontier stands in relation to the Canadian Forum and the academic journals; as an attempt to provide a body of literature which confronts social problems

in a radical fashion—a literature produced by artists who have chosen to engage in the reality of contemporary life rather than the introspective idealism of the "ivory tower."

Almost from the day it was organized, the Canadian Author's Association has epitomised for "progressive" writers the forces of literary conservatism and reaction. It is natural, therefore, that the criticism of New Frontier should aggressively oppose the attitudes toward poetry perpetuated by the C.A.A. In the September 1936 issue of New Frontier A. M. Stephen published an abridged version of his address to the 1936 C.A.A. convention held in Vancouver, under the title "Canadian Poets and Critics." By talking directly to them, Stephen sought to point out some of their misconceptions about the role of the critic in Canada. To do this, he chose to investigate why the international reputation of Canadian poetry was very low if not non-existent.

Stephen acknowledges that although the quality of Canadian poetry has not been particularly high, the quality of Canadian criticism has been ever lower. This fact, he says, is responsible not only for the lack of poetic distinction at home but also for the poor reputation of Canadian literature abroad. His argument for a new militant and honest self-criticism echoes, in more general terms, Calmer's criticism of New Provinces: "If the Canadian poet of today has not an appreciative audience either here or abroad, he must have the field prepared for him by criticism that is both creative and constructive."[56] Stephen's example of meaningless,

chauvinistic criticism which is "intended to force upon the consciousness of readers in England and America the idea that the shade of Shakespeare must fear for his laurels when the maple-crowned spirit of Canadian verse walks abroad at midnight"[57] are drawn from the then standard critical histories: Highways of Canadian Literature, edited by J. D. Logan and Archibald MacMechan's Headwaters of Canadian Literature. These are the kind of self-adulating texts which have set an unfortunate precedent in Canadian criticism and are holding back the development of Canadian poetry. These are also the kind of turgid critics who "have been largely responsible for the coolness of English men of letters in regard to Canadian verse."[58] This, it should be noted, is a rephrasing of the previous arguments for a revitalized, honest self-criticism first proposed by Smith in his Canadian Forum article of 1928, "Wanted: Canadian Criticism."[59] Stephen's summary of the traditional problem is stated with frankness and simplicity:

> . . . we have had to endure the extravagant and indiscriminant praise or the unintelligent censure of hack-writers imbued with an aggressive Canadianism of the parochial variety that is reminiscent of "spread-eagle" Americanism, or we have had to meet the supercilious ignorance of British-born reviewers who are incapable of seeing anything of outstanding value in anything Canadian—who feel that great art cannot flourish beyond the sound of Big Ben or the rumble of a London omnibus. Regionalism and parochialism has limited the vision of Toronto reviewers and has, in some instances, resulted in the creation of cults centered about the names of eastern writers whom these misguided enthusiasts were determined to force upon the public as paragons of literary excellence.[60]

Stephen is aware, then, that the change in subject matter and inspiration taking place in the poetry of the Thirties requires a similar shift in critical approach—a

move toward "a creative criticism based upon historical understanding and intelligent sympathy."[61] He too, sees some hope for this kind of criticism in the example set by Collin in The White Savannahs which, however vague in thought and aesthetic philosophy, is at least tending in the right direction. His concluding admonishment to the C.A.A. members gathered at the convention serves as a summary of the "progressive" attitude toward criticism desired by all who wrote for New Frontier:

> We must, . . . break the bondage of tradition but, in so doing, we must not lose the values which are essential to all great art. We are ready for the poetry of Today and demand a vision of the Future. However, upon this perilous pathway, we need the guidance of a literary criticism that possesses knowledge, intuitive sympathy, and a sense of direction.[62]

Duncan McNair's review of the convention in the same issue of the magazine, suggests strongly that Stephen's plea probably fell on deaf ears. Characterizing the C.A.A. as "a kind of horizontal champion [which] rouses once a year and resucitates itself into a state of coma,"[63] McNair discusses how all attempts, and especially those of Dorothy Livesay, to speak in favor of modern proletarian poetry were "ostentatiously choked to death by Dr. Pelham Edgar, President of the council and chief hangman of debaters."[64] McNair's review emphasizes the characteristic disdain felt by "progressive" thinkers toward the traditional conservatism which the C.A.A. had come to symbolize.

The content and tone of the New Frontier articles devoted to a discussion of the need for a revised critical approach to poetry are in several ways reminiscent of earlier

attempts by A. J. M. Smith and Leo Kennedy among others, to do the same thing during the twenties. They too attacked the principles of the C.A.A. and demanded more severe and incisive self-criticism which would help to bring Canadian poetry out of the Victorian past into the modern age.[65] It is important to note, however, that the critics of the thirties, more so than those of the twenties, felt that good literary criticism would not only improve the quality of Canadian poetry but in so doing would also improve the quality of Canadian life. The social function that poetry must serve was one of the major aspects that a revitalized criticism would seek to define during the thirties. A direction for poetry had been found. It was the same direction generally outlined in the preface to New Provinces and specifically defined in the most important literary manifesto to be published by New Frontier, Leo Kennedy's "Direction For Canadian Poets."[66]

A. M. Stephen's concern was to investigate the reasons why Canadian poetry had no international reputation and to propose means by which criticism could be refined and the situation improved. Leo Kennedy begins his article by getting at a more specific reason why Canadian poetry lacks relevance. It is because "English speaking Canadian poets have never been seriously accepted as interpreters of Canadian life."[67] The poets themselves are at fault because they have too long emulated the "official" poetry represented by The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse which is based upon subjective responses to

such intangible entities as "Love, Beauty, the First Crocus, Snow in April and similar graceful but immediately irrelevant bubbles."[68] Kennedy agrees with Stephen that the critics, professors and book reviewers are partially to blame for this, but for slightly different reasons. For Kennedy, the main failing of Canadian critics is that they "have made no effort to locate Canadian poetry in its social place, and to see its state of health or ill-health as a register of the health or ill-health of Canadian society."[69] The direct equation of the quality of poetry with the quality of society is not only the central premise on which Kennedy's argument is based but it is also the basis on which the whole proletarian poetic of the 1930's was founded. A new definition of the function of poetry, in opposition to the prevailing ideal of "art for art's sake," was proposed by Kennedy in the following manner:

> It is my thesis that the function of poetry is to interpret the contemporary social scene faithfully; to interpret the progressive forces in modern life which alone stand for cultural survival. And it is my private recommendation that, setting theory aside, middle class poets had better hustle down from the twenty-fifth floor of their steam-heated, janitor-serviced Ivory Tower, and stand on the pavement and find out and take part in what is happening today, before the whole chaste edifice is blasted about their ears and laid waste.[70]

Kennedy's thesis here is a concise statement of the radical shift in direction that New Frontier and the "progressive" literary attitudes it represented took during the Thirties. He was speaking for a literary movement which had come to understand the poet as a social activist and poetry as an instrument of social reform. Taking the Poetry Yearbook of 1932-33 as his example, Kennedy clearly indicates the kind

of poetry to which the proletarian movement was opposed. Warwick Chipman's preface to the Yearbook, which described the victims of the economic depression as a "betrayed generation,"[71] offered the collection of poetry as an imaginative palliative for their anxiety: a world of the imagination which would allow a brief escape from the ugly realities of daily life. It is this weak-willed, escapist function for poetry that Kennedy so strongly opposes. The kind of poetry which regards "reality as a deplorable deviation from the philosophy of Peter Pan and Wendy."[72] The alternative, of course, is a poetry with the courage to confront the social situation by taking both collective and individual social injustice as its subject matter. That this attitude was shared by critics other than Kennedy is evidenced by a review of Sara Bard Field's Darkling Plain which appeared in the January 1937 issue of New Frontier.[73] The poet prefaced her collection with a "Note To Fellow Marxists" in which she characterizes society as a group "longing for the Revolutionary Angel" and explains the nature of revolutionary poetry as a turning toward subjects "implicit in race consciousness; subjects which combine the familiar life with eternal mysteries." The reviewer sees this as "a naive statement of the poet's failure to master the social problems of her time" because it is too idealistic. "It is hardly necessary to point out," he says:

> . . . that the revolutionary movement is not an angel sent from the unknown to set everything in apple-pie order; rather it is the collective movement of tens of thousands of workers, farmers and intellectuals like Miss Field, wresting

from the routine of day to day existence weapons for the struggle against capitalist reaction.[74]

The poet, by escaping into subjects as general as "life, death, and the eternal mysteries" is avoiding the real challenge and the simple subject matter of which genuine revolutionary poetry is made. Thus, it is not only the Canadian poets of romantic inclination who are at fault in the eyes of the New Frontier critics. They were eager to advise contemporary poets everywhere of the requirements necessary for a true understanding of the function of revolutionary poetry. Their wish was to bring poets and poetry down from the phenomenal into the noumenal world.

But it is not only the traditions of romantic idealism and imaginative escape which come under Kennedy's scrutiny. More significant, from an aesthetic point of view, is his criticism of the established modern Canadian poets. Exempting Dorothy Livesay and F. R. Scott from his list, Kennedy finds particular fault with A. J. M. Smith, Robert Finch, A. M. Klein, Charles Bruce, E. J. Pratt, and Audrey Alexandra Brown. Although each have individual weaknesses in Kennedy's view, they all share a kind of "neo-metaphysical" aloofness in which poetry is understood to be apart from or above life. "A. J. M. Smith," he says:

> . . . is easily the most talented and painstaking poet of all under consideration here. Yet the snobbery and obscurity of his work has for years restricted him to publication in those journals which hold sternly to aesthetics come hell and high water.[75]

The proletarian aesthetic will not allow for a "private" or subjective kind of poetry and the implication is that Smith,

and poets like him, should follow the examples set by Dorothy Livesay and F. R. Scott who have "shaken themselves free of the superseded traditions."[76] and altered their poetry to meet the needs of the time. It is interesting to note that Kennedy does not exclude his own poetry from this criticism. Being associated with the Montreal group of the twenties, Kennedy too, had fallen under the influence of Eliot and the metaphysicals. About his book The Shrouding he observes ". . . it is all about the fertility myth and rites of imitative magic that you find in Fraser's Golden Bough, in a Canadian dress. This preoccupation with abstractions of death and rebirth really resulted in a few poems of some sensibility. However, these are entirely subjective and lack contact with the larger reality."[77] Such honesty, even to the extent of dismissing his only published book as inconsequential in the light of present circumstances, suggests the strength of Kennedy's convictions regarding the direction that he felt poetry should take. It is also significant that Kennedy's social poetry which was published in New Frontier from time to time under various pseudonyms, is markedly inferior even to the very derivative work which appeared in The Shrouding. Further consideration will be given to Kennedy as a proletarian poet when the poetry of New Frontier is discussed.

"Direction For Canadian Poets" expresses an additional need for a new vitality of language in Canadian poetry which will enable the new poetic forms to develop naturally and indigenously from Canadian culture. The American and English

proletarian writers are good examples of how the language of "common speech" can add artistic form to social poetic themes. In any case, the kind of poetry Kennedy asks for must deal, however it chooses, with contemporary society:

> This much is clear: poetry not of the living scene cannot be genuine because of the artificiality and self consciousness that writes itself in. Poetry that is of it, cannot worry along with old forms, because they do not fit. The progressive young poets of the United States and Day-Lewis, Spender, Thomas and others in England know about this. We must too.[78]

The tone of the article becomes increasingly aggressive and shrill toward the end and this is characteristic of much of the New Frontier criticism. It appears that the manifesto had become the ultimate critical form, a form which tends toward assertions and frenzied generalizations rather than an analytical approach to specific literary questions. The critical tendency is to shout at the reader in order to make an argument more forceful; to depend, like a good political speaker, as much upon emotional appeal as upon rationality and logic. In this regard, however, it is important to remember that Kennedy, besides being a poet and critic, was also the senior editor of New Frontier. Besides speaking for himself he is editorializing on behalf of the policy of the magazine. To press for cultural reform was as much a part of New Frontier's editorial policy as to promote political and social change. Thus, it is not unlikely that the article, as a critical manifesto, owed as much to the examples set by political writers as to an enthusiasm for literary change. As an editor of the magazine, it is probable then, that Kennedy

represents the general "progressive" attitude shared by the other editors and contributors as well as the proletarian movement they considered it their duty to promote. The extent to which Kennedy allows emotion to interfere with logic however, is illustrated clearly by his final description of the new poet and the function that his poetry should serve:

> He must touch life at a thousand points . . . grasp the heroism, joy and terror, the courage under privation and repression, the teeming life-stuff all around him that is also the stuff of great poetry! Poetry that is real, Canadian and contemporary can be written tomorrow by poets who worried about "dreams" and their precious egos yesterday. It will be welcomed by millions of Canadians who want their children to grow up straight limbed to enjoy a heritage of prosperity and peace, and who want the kind of writing that will help bring this about.'[79]

Such a poet would certainly have to be more than a super-hero. The desperation, sincerity, and abandoned idealism of such a statement, however, allows the reader to grasp the conviction of principle behind the humorous extravagance. The New Frontier criticism as a whole has many failings but passivity, equivocation, and lack of direction are not among them. Kennedy's fervor and single-mindedness are representative of the enthusiasm of New Frontier and his central thesis of the need for a new proletarian poetic is the keystone not only of the other criticism of the magazine but of Canadian literary progressivism in general.

Kennedy stated this attitude toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet even more emphatically in the February 1937 issue of New Frontier. In an article entitled "Hope For Us" published under the pseudonym of Leonard Bullen, he takes umbrage with Bertram Brooker's

essay "Art and Society" which prefaced the Yearbook Of The Arts In Canada 1936. Brooker stated his belief that the artist's obligation is to "beauty" and to himself rather than to society and that art should not ideally be considered as useful in any way. To this Kennedy replies:

> Mr. Brooker protests too much about the danger of applying art to purposes of propaganda. Self-evidently, the hypothetical, ideal artist he describes has already taken a definite side by subscribing to the bourgeois concept of artistic function, which is to fuddle with "beauty" all forms of art which by their tacit acceptance of the status quo, work for its futurity. Historical precedent indicates, surely, that there is no tenable middle ground, where the Tom Tiddlers of art can be unbiased and uninfluenced creators . . .[80]

After noting that the poetry published in the yearbook is decidedly out of date and unrepresentative of the contemporary milieu, Kennedy goes on to argue that the "art for art's sake" mentality is not only reactionary but also tends toward fascist thinking:

> We face the issues or we evade them by fleeing into abstractions, pretty landscapes, theories of the glorious timelessness of beauty, rhapsodic talk of the artists relation to the universe. And it can be noted here parenthetically that mystical preoccupations in our time have a practice of trailing into fascist thinking. Marinetti and Pirandello in Italy, Knut Hamsun in Scandinavia, and Thomas Wolfe in America have demonstrated the moral and artistic disintegration of this process . . . Art must keep its head clear and its feet on the pavement among people; for survival, artists must sooner or later align themselves with the forces of progress and social growth.[81]

Thus Kennedy's critical attitude is clear and the proletarian poetic he defines sets the general literary tone of the magazine.

In the June 1937 issue of New Frontier, Dorothy Livesay, another of the editors, published "Poet's Progress."[82]

In this article she attempted to "determine the real functions of the poet"[83] in a simpler and more reserved manner than Kennedy had done. Her article can be seen as a refinement of his manifesto. Kennedy's statement left the poet with the problem of writing a unique and individual poetry which was based upon collectivist principles and subject matter. The question became: how to be original when all proletarian poetry dealt with generally the same subject matter for the same general social purpose. Indeed, by the time Livesay's article appeared, proletarian poetry had encountered a good deal of adverse criticism which objected to its redundancy of tone and its penchant for didacticism and propaganda. It was this criticism of the poetry's "collectivist" nature that Livesay set out to refute. Her basic premise is that although the traditional attributes of a poet have not changed, the interpretation of them has:

> In the past there have been three definite attributes necessary to a poet. He must have an individual personality: he must associate himself with "pure ideas"; he must be the conveyer of emotional values. In my opinion the modern poet is not attempting to go beyond these limits. He is merely interpreting them somewhat differently in terms of the present day world.[84]

From this premise she argues that with regard to his "individuality," his association with "pure ideas" and his ability to convey "emotional values" the poet's subject does not really matter. Since all people of a particular generation share common experiences, the individuality of the poet is revealed in the personal way he chooses to transmit common experiences and not in the uniqueness of his experience

itself.[85] Basic "pure ideas" as well, can be applied to a context of social criticism in the thirties just as they have in the past from Horace to Dante and Whitman. Likewise, a common theme of social conflict can readily be infused with a variety of emotional values depending upon the poet's ability to convey them.

Thus she proposes that "there is an intimate relationship between the three functions of the poet. One can only arbitrarily distinguish between formal expression, philosophical content and emotional value in a poem."[86] It is the proletarian writer's job to exercise his talent in such a way that the three functions of the poet work to his advantage as a creator of social poetry which bears the mark of his artistic sensibility as well as his social awareness. If he is able to do this, his poetry, regardless of what less progressive critics may think, will constitute art and not just collectivist propaganda. Livesay's conclusion in this regard is highly optimistic:

> Recognizing that we are living in a time of transition, [the poet's] concern is to identify themselves with these forces in society which are working toward human development and expansion, as opposed to other groups, identified with capitalism, which are seeking to hold the clock back. That is the general philosophical direction. To those who still cling to the more static conception of society such poetry is "propaganda." Fifty years hence it will not seem so, and the critics will again have time to concern themselves with the highly varied differences between poets who are now lumped together as being ruined by the "collectivist complex."[87]

However, it will later be shown that a large majority of the proletarian poets did in fact produce propaganda rather than poetry. That they blinded themselves to the truth of their

achievement or consciously allowed their art to be sacrificed to the cause of social reform, suggests the tenacity with which their poetic beliefs were held. It also puts into clearer perspective the close relationship between poetry and politics during the period. Although Livesay's argument that excellent poetry could be written from the proletarian point of view, is well taken, it is a matter of record that the functions of poetry as she defined them, were not compatible with the role of the Canadian poet during the Thirties. Like the greater number of poets in England and America the Canadian poet's view of himself and his art balanced too heavily toward social propaganda to achieve any great degree of aesthetic merit.

In A Hope For Poetry, Day Lewis posed the question thus: "Poetry was born from magic: it grew up with religion: it lived through the age of reason: is it to die in the age of propaganda?"[88] Having asked themselves the same question, many critics, including Livesay and several others writing for New Frontier, sought the answer.

In her review of West's Crisis and Criticism which appeared under the title "The Artist Versus Society" in New Frontier of April 1937, Margaret Fairley discusses the ideal relationship between the committed revolutionary artist and the society he serves. Her argument is the classical one on this subject, having for its inspiration the writing of Marx and Lukacs. Only the bourgeois artist, who "prides himself on remaining aloof"[89] can, in times of social and economic

crisis, "deny the urgency of life."[90] It is impossible for the non-aligned writer either to satisfy his own talent or to serve the society in which he lives. There must be a sense of immediacy about the art he creates; an immediacy which will allow its social purpose to be realized in the present rather than recognized as art by future generations. The revolution is now, and since the hope for future society depends upon the outcome of contemporary conflicts, an art which is made for posterity is all but worthless unless the artist has the ability to make it great enough to serve both ends. But regardless of its quality, literature must never be allowed to become, as it has to some extent in Fairley's view, "merely an enjoyment, a rest, a consolation . . . a sideline to the revolution."[91] Indeed, "it is part of the revolution itself, to bring the artist once more to actively feel the productive energy of society and identify himself with it."[92] By remaining aloof, the bourgeois artist does both himself and his society a disservice because by becoming unselfishly involved in the spirit of the cause, his creative power will be heightened to a far greater extent than if he remains on the periphery. To be engaged in the social conflict, however, does not necessarily mean that the poet functions primarily as a propagandist or slogan-maker. Propaganda is only the by-product of his creativity:

> The good revolutionary writer does not work an addition sum, art plus propaganda: it is no good for him to say "Go to, I will introduce some propaganda next time." If he has hitherto seen the world as something to possess and enjoy, and now sees it as something to be made, he will naturally take his place, with all his gifts to the good, and will share in the

making.[93]

In other words, the ideal proletarian poet sees no discrepancy between art and propaganda. Because of his experience and sensibility he is able to create an art in which the two are fused in a manner which enables it to serve both social and aesthetic ends.

G. Campbell McInnes, who frequently commented on the visual arts for the magazine, published three articles which indicate that the proletarian attitudes toward painting were very close to those toward poetry. In "Art and Propaganda,"[94] McInnes explains the relationship between the aesthetic and utilitarian functions of art by discussing the left wing picture magazine Photo-History, which, unlike Life and Look, attempted to deal with subjects of "vital interest to leftists" by means of photography and juxtapositions. His argument is very close to that of Margaret Fairley. The magazine is successful, he observes, because instead of resorting to overstated cliches, the editors have chosen to let the subject matter speak for itself through significant juxtapositions, understatement and symbolism. Their main virtue is that they do not force their moral or message upon the reader. Unlike lesser artists the editors have not been "overwhelmed by the force of the message which they must give" and therefore they are able, through "creative genius and strong inner discipline to express this message through formal means." In short, the successful proletarian artist does not, like Diego Rivera, use anecdotal "italics" to convey his

message. Rather, he is closer to Jose Clemente Oroszco whose "sinewy and sombre designs are knit together by a strongly disciplined feeling; smouldering and profound, and with a deeply spiritual quality . . ." But, as McInnes's reviews of the tenth annual exhibition of The Canadian Society of Painters In Watercolor and the exhibition of the Canadian Society of Graphic Art indicate,[95] this fusion of art and propaganda is not only accomplished by "great artists." Even youthful painters who have chosen the proletarian direction can produce successful work. The important thing, however, is that they take their talents in the new direction and that they consciously choose to break with the past. McInnes's reasoning here is very reminiscent of that of the New Frontier literary critics. The brief history of Canadian art in which he points out some of the reactionary elements which artists of the Thirties must overcome, is in fact, remarkably similar to those described as obstacles to Canadian poets:

> Up to the turn of the Century, Canadian art was, broadly speaking, nonexistent. This was partly due to the pressure of pioneering work, partly to a lack of national consciousness, and more particularly to the fact that what artists there were worked in the currently fashionable European tradition . . . the bulk of artists were content with neo-Barbizon landscapes, neo-Dutch genre pieces, and the founding of societies to perpetuate these empty imitations in a rigid hierarchy. It is tragic to realize that so young a country as Canada already has its own Royal Academy, where mediocre practitioners, secure in the possession of three magic letters, regularly present us with their sterile little universe, boxed, taped, wrapped in cellophane and provided with a little pricetag, and atrophy the creative spirit.[96]

If we substitute Romantic and Victorian literary models for the "neo-Barbizon landscapes" and "neo-Dutch genre pieces"

and the C.A.A. for the Royal Academy it is evident that McInnes, as a critic of art, was attempting to steer the painters of the Thirties in much the same direction that the literary critics were proposing for the poets. Just as the literary critics saw the real subject matter of poetry to be man himself, so the critics of the visual arts tried to turn painters away from landscape toward the people who inhabit it. The similarity between McInnes's attack upon the landscape painters and Kennedy's attack upon the traditional poets in "Direction For Canadian Poets" is striking:

> Think of that, Artist of the pre-Cambrian Shield, who twenty, perhaps even ten years ago might have been performing a valuable function in arousing your people to a sense of their country's beauty. But that has been done and it is time to come down from your ivory tower, to come out from behind your pre-Cambrian Shield and dirty your gowns in the mud and sweat of conflict.[97]

Here McInnes is entreating Canadian artists to become involved in the social revolution and to do their part to help it succeed. If, in the Thirties, the slogan "the artist must be red or dead"[98] is perhaps too extreme, there is nevertheless no doubt that an artist who aligns himself to some extent with Marxist aesthetic principles is, for McInnes, more likely to produce relevant work than the artist who remains aloof and socially unaware.

Edwin Barry Bergum elaborated indirectly upon the importance of social commitment to the artist in the November 1936 number of New Frontier.[99] He was responding to James T. Farrell's A Note On Literary Criticism in which Farrell brought attacks against the left wing American critics who,

he felt, were substituting economic propaganda for sound literary judgement. An editorial comment in the same issue of the magazine entitled "Thunder On The Left,"[100] discussed the controversy that Farrell's book had precipitated among left wing American writers and critics. In repudiating Marxist literary criticism in the United States, Farrell had not hesitated to mention such well known men as Granville Hicks, Malcolm Cowley and Michael Gold as the chief culprits and this had resulted in a rather heated debate in New Masses and other magazines concerning the value of Marxist literary criticism. It was really the kind of debate that the New Frontier critics wished could be initiated in Canada and the editors' views in this regard are a revealing commentary on the apathy that Canadians felt toward such literary issues:

> From the comparative safety of Canada, a wasteland where no literary dispute worthy of the name could possibly find roots we can view the skirmishes across the border with pleasure. We feel that they are a sign of the health and strength of left wing literature and Marxist criticism, and although much of the controversy has been clouded over by personal feelings and misrepresentation, many important truths have been enunciated in the heat of the battle.[101]

Bergum's article apparently did not generate a great deal of interest but it did result in one angry letter to the editor which suggested strongly that its stand against Farrell was too moderate.[102] The writer reasoned that since Farrell's attitude toward the Marxist critics is not that of a friend, therefore he must be an enemy; and after arguing that Farrell has refused to make the moral choice that men like Briffault and others had made, he suggests that Farrell, like the fascists, is attempting to "liquidate revolutionary literature."

Although Bergum agrees that art cannot be given an "automatic economic interpretation,"[103] he does suggest that the "general tendency in the United States to simplify Marxian philosophy into an easy sequence of dogmatic statements"[104] is very misleading. This he attempts to correct by explaining that "if art has any value for a Marxist . . . art is not economics . . . the sermon, the street corner speech. Anything art tells us about economics, politics, philosophy, is the inevitable inference we make for ourselves from its enjoyment."[105] This is essentially the same point made by Fairley with regard to poetry and echoed by McInnes with regard to painting, but Bergum defines the function of art more succinctly:

> The practical value of art is its service in self-revelation. Through it we come to know ourselves better, our friends and enemies (our class alignments), the direction in which our personalities are developing, the tendencies in ourselves we deplore and those we strengthen by the heightened consciousness of their existence.[106]

The important distinction here is that art serves an end which is essentially personal. And the implication is that the collective cause of the social revolution cannot be served by any art unless it succeeds first as a means of heightening individual consciousness and bringing about self revelation. Thus, Bergum is taking issue with the tendency of Marxist or proletarian literary critics to "put the cart before the horse" in their zeal to accomodate art into their ideology of international social revolution.

This tendency, it will later be shown, also had a negative effect upon the aesthetic quality of proletarian

poetry. E. K. Brown's criticism of F. R. Scott's socially oriented poetry published in New Provinces is to the point here:

> . . . I should like to utter a vehement warning against the supposition that such verses are really excellent. How can so true a poet as Mr. Scott sink to so low a level? . . . The urgency of social issues has so captured Mr. Scott's mind that he is unable to respond to great art or create it. That is a pity.[107]

Scott was not the ideal proletarian poet described by Kennedy and the others. Despite critical arguments to the contrary, and the many attempts to show how poetry and propaganda could be combined, very few poets successfully found the formula. It is, in fact, interesting to note how few poets are cited as examples of what the progressive writer should be in the criticism of New Frontier. Spender and Day Lewis are mentioned occasionally as being generally representative of the level of artistry the Canadian poets should strive to attain, but there is very little specific critical observation. What does appear to be clear to the critics is that the genuine "progressive" writer achieves a socialist aesthetic as a final stage of his artistic development. Jack Conroy, in the New Frontier of April 1936, reiterates Joseph Freeman's explanation of the way in which his proletarian poetic evolved. "At first he was a poet who believed that art and economics were separate fields and that their orbits would never coincide."[108] Then, after having understood that the world was in great turmoil he began to study economics and to write poetry which "became sloganized and mechanical."[109] This stage was followed by "a period of sterility and despair

after which he learned that the goal of the revolutionary artist is to fuse fervor and economic truth with rounded expression."[110] The artistic metamorphosis described here is not only a means of explaining the profound change in poetic direction, but it is also a statement of the way Kennedy's ideal Canadian poet described in "Direction For Canadian Poets" should come into being. He must poetically evolve in a direction which takes him from private to public speech.

David Martin proposes in New Frontier of September 1936, that the one poet who has best achieved this growth is Archibald MacLeish.[111] Martin's article is an important one because it synthesizes much of the previous criticism which has been discussed. Calmer, Brown and Stephen all voiced the need for a revitalized Canadian criticism if the quality of Canadian poetry was to improve. Their primary hope was that criticism would become more aggressive in its judgement and that future critics would cease to praise mediocre writing simply because it was Canadian and condemn modern experimentation because it was new. Leo Kennedy's manifesto stressed the need for a change of aesthetic direction on the part of Canadian poets. A direction which led away from subjects of romantic escape and objective description toward the immediate social issues confronting contemporary society; away from the introspective "ivory tower" aesthetic practiced by Smith, Finch and others which understood art to be independent of society, toward a poetry which confronted social

injustice by taking up the cause of social democratic revolution through contemporary subject matter and bold language. Critics like Livesay, Fairley and Bergum sought to explain the rationale behind the association of poetry with propaganda and to place the poetry of protest into cultural perspective by linking it either historically with world literature or politically with Marxist literary theory. Conroy's article attempted to show that poets who had chosen to dedicate their writing to the social cause had not come hastily to their decision and that the ideal proletarian aesthetic was the logical end of a lengthy and painful artistic development. If we now turn to Martin's article entitled "From Private to Public Speech," with the above in mind, it is possible to understand why he sees MacLeish as the ultimate revolutionary poet. He is the poet who has lived through the stages described by Conroy and, in Martin's view, who produced his best writing only when he chose to devote his art to social reform. MacLeish, then, is the prototype of the progressive artist; the poet who is concerned with life rather than death; with the present rather than the past. Martin places him as follows:

> On the one hand were the titans of bourgeois literature, Proust, Joyce, Eliot and their satellites, giving voice to the decay of a society and a culture, and on the other were the revolutionary writers, giving voice to the birth of a society and a culture . . . In Archibald MacLeish we see the natural unfolding of the mental processes of this transition.[112]

The New Frontier critics are alike in their suspicion that a preoccupation with "objective truth" will prevent a poet from reaching his full potential as a revolutionary

writer. An aesthetic based upon the private, "selfish" experience of, and response to, objective reality is, for them, regressive rather than progressive. It places the poet either in the tradition of Eliot and The Wasteland or of Pound and the imagists. Martin suggests that MacLeish is exemplary of the poet who has for too long faced these hindrances to his development. "It was the delusion of 'objective truth' that did most in keeping a poet of MacLeish's ability away from the conclusions that a realist had to come to."[113] In other words, the revolutionary poet's direction has to be outward from his own self toward compassion for his fellow man and hatred of those forces which seek to oppress him. "With this breaking away from himself and his consciousness focussed upon others he [must turn] to people, unknown as yet to him and somewhat alien but commanding his love and attention."[114] Though the reference here is specifically to MacLeish, there is no doubt that the attitude sums up the fundamental change in aesthetic direction that the New Frontier critics believed all serious poets must take. Thus, MacLeish represents the kind of poet Kennedy wished for in his manifesto: a man who had, through difficult stages, become a truly revolutionary artist by genuinely evolving from a private to a public poetic voice.

If the literary articles published in New Frontier are meant to serve as examples of the kind of revitalized criticism that several of the writers felt must be written, then there are some general characteristics by which such

criticism may be identified. An obvious common trait is the tendency toward the manifesto type of statement. It is a criticism which depends more upon vigorous assertions of the need for reform than upon an analytical approach to individual works of art. This may be because the criticism is entirely sociological in nature. The New Frontier critics seem in full agreement with Calverton's opinion that in America: "The time [has] come . . . when it is no longer possible for literary people of advanced intelligence to discuss . . . literature in the old psychological terms. The sociological approach has become the new yardstick of literary interpretation."[115]

The preoccupation with literature as a revolutionary force also accounts for the common desire among these critics to redefine the role of the poet and the function of poetry. The "progressive" poet of the thirties was pictured by them as an artist who had honestly arrived at his choice to serve the cause of justice for the "common man." His artistic task was to discover a method of fusing poetry and propaganda in a way which would make the poem aesthetically pleasing as well as socially functional. The result was, of course, that a great deal of the revolutionary poetry deteriorated into trite sloganeering. It is therefore not difficult to understand why the critics often found themselves rather weakly defending the positive relationship between poetry and propaganda. Their arguments, however, are not entirely without value. One can agree with Northrop Frye that:

> It is easy for the critic to point out the fallacy of judging the merit of literature by its subject matter, but these arguments over the role of propaganda were genuine and serious moral conflicts . . . They raised the fundamental issue of the role of the creative mind in society and by doing so helped to give a maturity and depth to Canadian writing which is a permanent part of its heritage.[116]

Here Frye has pointed out the fundamental virtue of the "progressive" Canadian critics who were represented in New Frontier. Their determination to force the poet to revise his image of himself as well as to alter the aesthetic principles on which his art was based was largely responsible for shifting the direction of Canadian poetry during the Thirties and preparing the way for the resurgence of literary activity during the 1940's.

Most generally, their wish was to return poetry to the people. That is, to make poetry focus upon the anxieties of the individual who was attempting to live with dignity and meaning in a world of economic depression and political turmoil. Like the graphic artists and painters of the period, the poets saw the uselessness of portraying a landscape in which the individual had no significance. Instead they chose to depict man as foreground subject matter. The meaning that the critics attached to the term "progressive" is important in this context. The reactionary writers were those who remained in the gloomy, esoteric shadow of T. S. Eliot or attempted to duplicate the austere, subjective observations fostered by Pound. Proletarian poetry, the critics felt, should speak positively of social and literary change with language "toughened" by experience and subject matter based

on the harsh realities of everyday life. This was the new function of poetry they proposed. It was a poetry which would, if necessary, goad its readers into action instead of offering a safe retreat into an ideal world of the imagination. The extent to which the poetry of New Frontier fulfilled these obligations will be the next stage of investigation in this thesis.

ii The Poetry of New Frontier

Along with its literary criticism, New Frontier also published twelve short stories, one play, and fifty-one poems. It will be the purpose of this section to investigate thematically the degree to which the poetry of the magazine succeeds or fails in meeting the artistic standards established by the New Frontier critics. Stevens has discussed some of the poetry from the point of view of its general reflection of social awareness[117] and the present study will serve to elaborate upon his observations by providing a more specific account of the relationship between New Frontier's critical demands and the poetry which attempted to meet them. A convenient starting point is afforded by the fact that both Leo Kennedy and Dorothy Livesay, whose critical articles have previously been discussed, also published the largest individual selections of poetry in the magazine. Thus it is possible to draw comparisons between their artistic theories as critics and their literary creations as poets in order to

see how effectively they meet their own criteria regarding the function of poetry and the role of the poet.

Kennedy published eight poems in New Frontier and they are interesting examples of how he attempted to give poetic expression to his critical ideals. They divide rather neatly into three types. Three of them--"Calling Eagles," "Advice To A Young Poet," and "Summons For This Generation," are poetic rephrasings of the call for more vigorous social engagement on the part of the poet which he voiced in "Direction For Canadian Poets." A second group consisting of "New Comrade," "You, Spanish Comrade," "Revolutionary Greeting," and "Memorial To The Defenders" are examples of the "outward" looking poetry he hoped for in his article. They are poems which centre upon compassion and sympathy for the devoted revolutionary, the comrades in Canada and Europe upon whose courage and determination the hope for a better world depends. Instead of directing his attention inward and making his subjective view the dominant aspect of these poems, he has attempted to turn his vision outward and to take the condition of other people for his subject. "Epitaph For A Canadian Statesman" represents the third type of poem and is an example of the socio-political satire he felt was necessary if Canadian poetry as a whole was to serve as an instrument of reform. Only "Calling Eagles" and "Summons For This Generation" were published under Kennedy's own name. F. W. Watt, however, has shown that the poems published under the pseudonyms Leonard Bullen and Arther Beaton are also his.[118] The pen-names were

likely used to mask the fact that he contributed so frequently to the magazine.

The first group of poems illustrates quite clearly Kennedy's preoccupation with the need to call the poet, the philosopher, and the man of vision to action. In "Calling Eagles" (NP June 1937) the "swift thinkers, readers in books and the bones of nature" are likened to eagles who often live too far above the world. Their magnificant grace, strength, and vivid perception are wasted in the cold isplation of "the ragged peaks of the mind." Thus the speaker entreats them to "Come down into life, . . . where iron grinds bone, / Hands falter / And brave men perish for a tyrant's peace; / Come where Spain strangles in blood, Ethiopia / Groans at the ironcased heel." The eagle's talents are not his alone and they must be shared with those who are less fortunate and in need of help. In the third stanza the summons is repeated with the added conclusion that they must realize that even an eagle's natural role must change if the world demands it:

> Drop from your eyrie, spurning the misted heights,
> Plunge to the valley where life is and verdure,
> Join with the groundlings, multitudes,
> with hope and passion
> Lifting their fists with the steel clenched, towering
> A new state from the crumble and wrack of the old;

You are part of this turmoil, Eagles, knit to its glory.

Once the eagles understand that they have a kinship with the "groundlings" they can justify a close association with them and not be out of place in their new environment. In fact, the poem ironically suggests that it is only through

an understanding that "There is work for . . . strong beaks and the thundering wings, / For the clean flight of the mind and the sharp perception" that the eagles can truly experience life.

The final line of the poem, which appears in italics, makes this most important aspect of the call to action clear. It is not only to help in the common struggle that the eagles must come down from the heights. They must also descend in order to save themselves through the realization that "There is only a glacial death on the lonely crags." The obligation of the poet, the man of imagination and acute vision, is not only to others but also to himself. This is the same argument that Kennedy employed in "Direction For Canadian Poets" when he demanded that "poets . . . hustle down from [their] Ivory Tower and stand on the pavement and find out and take part in what is happening today."[119] The poem is a metaphoric restatement of Kennedy's major critical argument for the necessity of a change in direction for Canadian poets. In order to avoid a literary and spiritual death the poet must decidate his life and art to the revolutionary cause.

A more direct poetic statement of this same theme is given in "Advice To A Young Poet" (NF April 1937). Here, however, the speaker asks the young poet to look to the precedents set by Communist "Ancestors such as ours / Marx, Engels, Luxemburg / Whose precious life-stuff thinned / Limning a cleaner world." The advice they gave is still valid and it is presented in the poem by means of a series of

positive directives: "Cling eagerly to grass, / Fix passion onto stone, / Hook living hands on air, / . . . Assert the toiler's state, / Define the worker's want . . ." all of which were being done continually by left wing prose writers who, unlike Kennedy, occasionally offered suggestions how these goals might be accomplished. But the central advice of the speaker in the poem again, as in the critical article and "Calling Eagles," is to "bind your breastbone fast / To men you never knew: / Manifesto for your cords." The poet must tie himself to others by spiritually joining the common struggle for a better life and by articulating the terms by which such a life can be achieved. This he does by making his poems manifestoes which "Fuse slogan to your chant; / And share your joy in earth, / Delight in hill and bird / With puzzled men who reach / To freedom as for sword." Thus the speaker suggests that the poet has a duty to carry on the work of his Communist ancestors by writing poems which will help to bring their vision of world brotherhood about.

"Summons For This Generation" (NF April 1936) can be seen as a thematic combination of the two poems that have just been discussed because by appealing to a whole generation rather than to specific individuals characterized as poets or eagles, the poem is both advice and a summons to action. Here Kennedy is presenting the ideal physical and psychological attitude that the engaged members of his generation should attempt to achieve. The portrait is of the ideal revolutionary "with vigorous grouped / Limbs, with wrists, with hands

alertly splayed." This is a generation which includes poets who should be similarly alert, combining physical preparedness with an incisive intellect which will enable them to act:

> With clamour in the lips and the pulse the tongue
> Bell-clanging in the steeple of the head,
> With thought, with laughter and the loosely-strung
> Spine-taut, the light heel spurning the pampered dead,
> With dominant restatements of the blood.

The tonal and thematic similarity between this poem and the others is obvious. There is, however, a somewhat surprising disparity in structure and diction between it and the others. The poem's rigid rhyme scheme of abcbca in the first sextet and defefd in the second suggests that Kennedy, unlike the ideal social poet he describes, has not deviated very far from traditional forms. It is also significant that his language in this poem is markedly traditional at times. The opening two lines: "Revoke your ebb's dispersal with arrayed / Bright flesh on stalwart scaffolding of chalk," for example, are Georgian if not Victorian in inspiration. The rigid iambic pentameter that carries the poem along reinforces the impression that it is derived from the same models Kennedy urged the revolutionary poet to abandon. This is the only poem of the seven which is so precisely reminiscent of those in his collection The Shrouding which he published in 1933 but it nevertheless shows the influence that Kennedy himself felt from traditional examples. His own difficulty in writing "new" poetry may account in a small way for the vehemence of his arguments for artistic reform. Although he suggested in his article that the inspiration and subject matter for modern

social poetry was close at hand, his own efforts as a poet suggest that the task of writing a social poetry which was "real, contemporary, and Canadian" was certainly not an easy one.

These three poems also indicate the difficulty that Kennedy encountered in using contemporary social subject matter in a realistic manner. Although they are replete with references to general and particular social injustices; actual political struggles in Spain, Ethiopia, Vienna, and Brazil and names such as Weissel, Wallisch, Prestes, Marx, Engels, and Luxemburg, the poems are in fact based upon images of the ideal. The men of vision in "Calling Eagles" and the poet of "Advice To A Young Poet" are all supermen who can never exist. They are members of an ideal generation of united men which bears little resemblance to that of the Thirties. The poems are manifestoes designed to inspire and uplift the human spirit in much the same way that Kennedy's criticism was designed to foster a more profound awareness of humanity on the part of Canadian poets. Kennedy's criticism certainly implied that one of the major functions of revolutionary poetry should be that of providing manifestoes from which people could learn as well as receive inspiration. In this respect the poems bear out Kennedy's critical principles well. Stevens contends that because there was neither a real audience for social poetry nor a "cohesive core of political thinking . . . the Canadian poet wishing to write social verse had to educate whatever audience he reached into accepting

both his poetry and his ideas about society."[120] This was offered as an explanation for what Stevens saw to be the "rather matter-of-fact repertorial tone"[121] of many Canadian poems of the Thirties and even though the tone of Kennedy's poems is certainly not matter-of-fact or repertorial it does appear that their educational purpose cannot be denied.

This educational function is continued in the second grouping of Kennedy's poems which appeared in New Frontier. In these, however, the advice is directed toward the comrades who are actually physically involved in the revolution rather than toward the artists and intellectuals who are the philosophers of it. The tone and imagery of these poems is very similar to those of the first group. In "Revolutionary Greeting" (NF November 1936) the "comrade" is advised in four parallel stanzas to be beautiful and proud, straightlimbed and physically alert, poised and eager, and finally, kind, patient and tender. These are the qualities that the revolutionary comrade must strive for and again Kennedy is presenting a portrait of the ideal revolutionary fighter, the complete man who is physically and psychologically attuned to the work he must perform. The final stanza is a summary of the preceding four parallel stanzas and it indicates the candor with which Kennedy attempted to combine inspirational dialogue with bald political statement:

> Be brave as beautiful, as straightlimbed, poised, compassionate,
> giving example: shaming the comrades hesitant,
> fearful of failure: be fearless, hurling the slogans
> scornful of violence, urging mass action, raising
> the banner: WORKERS OF THE WORLD
> UNITE! The workers of the world have need of
> courage.

The poem progresses toward this conclusion by means of a series of animal images which are meant to symbolize the personality of the ideal comrade. The first stanza in which the revolutionary is asked to be beautiful and proud, has the image of the hawk as its basis; his hair is likened to a hawk feather and his mouth should be "exquisite and bent like a bird's wing." The second stanza which describes the ideal physical bearing of the man, suggests that he should have "power and leopard grace for thigh's movement, / hip's sway." In the third stanza the image of the bird is recalled when the comrade is told to be poised with "nipples alert bird beak thrust outward." All of these animal qualities however, must be joined with a very human tenderness which will allow him to comfort "the head bloodied by nightsticks, the picket felled, the relief marcher choking with tear gas." The resulting composite image is that of a rather exotic griffin-like creature which has somehow managed to retain the virtue of human compassion. This illustrates an interesting problem in Kennedy's attitude toward revolutionary man. His great philosophical difficulty is in depicting the dual nature of the devoted revolutionary who must be a swift and violent killer on the one hand and a compassionate lover of humanity on the other. The problem of reconciling these two opposing attitudes is often a major cause of aesthetic weakness in Kennedy's social poems. One wishes that he would take a more positive stand in either one direction or the other. The introduction of an element of compassion into a poem which is

based upon expressing the need for strength, violence, and resolute courage frequently softens its impact and leads to sentimentality or a vague moral conclusion.

The image of the eagle also appears in the poem "You, Spanish Comrade" (NF November 1936). Here Kennedy has centered his attention on a particular Spanish comrade engaged in the war against fascism. Again, the purpose of the poem is to both sympathize with his particularly bloody role in the international revolution and to give relevance to the soldier's sacrifice by restating the philosophical and ideological principles for which he is fighting. Like the revolutionary poet, the revolutionary soldier must be an heroic figure; an eagle that he calls to:

> Swing . . . high over barricades and plunge
> boldly, talon and beak flash golden
> in Toledo sunlight, bayonet and beak
> fierce thrust as fascist throats, the rifle butts
> wing-buffeting, whirling, splintering for freedom;
> scream, harrassed bird, wind-lover, for Asturian
> fists death-hurling, for worker's strength
> taut, driving invasion seaward.

This hysterical tone, in keeping with the image of the attacking eagle, is gradually altered as the poem continues. In the second stanza which proposes that even though the eagle should fall, "the struggle is no death" because the better world which will inevitably arive from the ruins created by war will be built upon "foundations here with bone for granite, / spilled blood and flesh for mortar." This grisly and effective image, however, heightens the impression that the speaker in the poem is very much removed from the conflict. The purpose of dying in battle can never be as clear as this to the one

who dies. Kennedy's sympathy for the man whom he is spiritually trying to join is sincere but the reader is left with the impression that the speaker in the poem is more attracted to the idea of revolution than to the actual suffering of those who must die for the cause. The utopian future envisioned in the final stanza only contributes to this impression. Kennedy is forever the idealist at heart. His wish to write positive "progressive" poetry in keeping with his critical principles ironically leads him toward romantic idealism instead of social realism. This is borne out in the final stanza of the poem. Here the hysterical violence of the first stanza which represents the immediate conflict has been modified to a tone of serenity and an atmosphere of bucolic peace representative of the future world where "there'll be [time] to stand and breathe . . . a place . . . for work and skill and learning, / for peasants turning earth no locust bares, / and girls with flowers, new children springing tall." In "Memorial To The Defenders" (NF February 1937) which was published under the name "Leonard Bullen," Kennedy again employs imagery of mutilation and pain in order to describe the extreme suffering which the true comrade must endure:

> You comrades rearing separate barricades
> Of bone that's prompt to splinter, blood to spurt
> And intricate, swift nerves that shock and dull
> At blast of thermite and bullet's rip:
> You Workers gnawed by death astride a cloud,
> Shrivelled by flame thrown, churned with mud and steel,
> The limbs recoiling as the eyeballs twist,
> The breath frayed aout between prised, lurching ribs

But this violence also holds an "increment of joy" because of

the "clean world" which will result from their sacrifice and the "newborn men" who will one day be able to live in freedom.

This hope for the future is continued in the fourth poem of this group, "New Comrade" (NF September 1936). It is a tribute to the birth of an infant into the troubled world of the Thirties. He is a new comrade who is "small yet for the discipline and mass action / young for the fiery speeches and the blind police violence / puckered and waiting / . . . new and unused to a dying world." Through a series of juxtapositions the speaker contrasts the innocence of the child with the ruthlessness of the world he was born into and suggests that the possibilities for his future depend on the outcome of the present struggle. The child's pillow is "depressed barely by the slight weight of a head that may shift mountains / span an ocean with steel / fetter the atom / or split like a ripe fruit in the enfilade of dum-dums." The poem is therefore yet another rallying call for proletarian victory and an expression of the duty of those involved in the revolution to assure that children like the one in the poem can realize their potential in a better world. The speaker's contemporaries must "have purpose and the courage of those who fight for the generations." The poem concludes with a prayer for the strength which will allow children to survive through the "greater birth" of a new socialist society which will come with the success of the revolution. If this happens, all children of the infant's generation "may . . . have peace and work creation where our shadows are." This poem is more

restrained than the others and possesses a sincerity which is not entirely unbelievable. It does not have the quality of forced enthusiasm which is characteristic of Kennedy's social poems. He seems here to have succeeded best in achieving the kind of sympathetic response to his fellow-men that all the poems of this second group strive for.

"Epitaph For A Canadian Statesman" (NF April 1936) represents the third type of poem Kennedy published in New Frontier. It is a whimsical satire directed at R. B. Bennett who was removed from power in 1935. Bennett has been defeated by "time" rather than parliamentary vote or public disapproval. His empty promises have not come true and the economic crisis has continued to escalate and thus the speaker is relieved that "Time has pricked this bag of wind / Which parliamentary thrusts could not; / The iron heel that clicked and rang / Corrodes to bio-chemic rot." Bennett is viewed by Kennedy in the way that most left wing thinkers saw him: as an independently wealthy politician who favored the interests of big business and capitalism over those of the poor, the unemployed, and the farmers. It is for this reason that "Industry's captains, C.M.A., / Draft plaintive euologies for him / Whose swallow tails and penguin paunch / are fluttering with the cherubim." The businessmen are also part of the cartoon Kennedy is drawing in the poem and it concludes with the speaker gloating: "O Bosses, wring your chubby hands, / Weep sweetly as the crocodile; / And mourn your prototype brought low / Though versed in constutitional guile."

This is hardly the kind of satiric invective that

Kennedy asked for in "Direction For Canadian Poets," but it does illustrate that he was capable of writing light satire as well as highly serious, overly wrought revolutionary verse. Kennedy could be gleeful at seeing Bennett and all he represented thrown from power in Canada and the occasion offered reason for fun rather than earnest social comment because despite his poor reputation, Bennett was no Franco, Hitler, or Mussolini.

All of the poems that Kennedy published in New Frontier try, in one way or another, to conform to the critical standards he proposed in his article. The three types of poems that have been discussed suggest that his chief success lies in his earnest devotion to the revolutionary cause. The sincerity of his conviction is quite evident from the tone of the poetry whether it is shrill and hysterical or subdued and sentimental. It is the same sincerity that underlies the rash enthusiasm of his criticism. For the most part, the poems serve the same function as the criticism. They tend to be manifestoes which either seek to inform the reader of the necessity of sympathizing with the "common front" or attempts to inspire and ennoble those who are involved in the revolutionary struggle. The poems fail as examples of social realism however, because in attempting to give force to his beliefs, Kennedy too often resorts to ideal portraits of poets, philosophers and soldiers and ideal visions of the utopian future which will justify all of the contemporary pain and suffering. There can be no doubt that Kennedy was attempting to put an end to his "aesthetic flag-pole sitting"[122] of The Shrouding

and to write a new poetry which conformed to his "thesis that the function of poetry is to interpret the social scene faithfully; to interpret especially the progressive forces in modern life which alone stand for cultural survival."[123] Regardless of the artistic quality of Kennedy's social verse, it is evident that the poems aim at stirring the emotions by dealing frankly with the important issues of the day.

Kennedy suggested in his article that Dorothy Livesay was a poet who had successfully shaken herself "free of superseded [literary] traditions."[124] The poems she contributed to New Frontier can be seen as examples of how this was accomplished. They also offer an opportunity to observe the manner in which her critical ideas expressed in "Poet's Progress" find poetic application. The main thesis of her article asserted that poetry could maintain its individuality and uniqueness and at the same time deal with "collectivist" or common subject matter. She maintained that uniqueness and originality were dependent upon the poet's individual method of expression rather than upon his ability to deal with a variety of subjects. "Doom Elegy" (NF July 1936) which later appeared as one of a sequence of poems in Day And Night, is an example of how Livesay attempted to give personal and unique expression to "collectivist" subject matter.

The poem deals with the emotions and psychological disposition that the generation of the Thirties have been conditioned to accept. The problems they have grown up with have prepared them for the grief which comes with bad news and they are able to accept even doomsday as inevitable. This

is a tragic condition to have reached and the poem is a "Doom Elegy" because it mourns the loss of the human capacity for surprise and it sympathizes with a generation who have come to accept the fact of a barren future. It is, in effect, an expression of the despair which often characterized the depression years. Her subject then, is the common one that so many social poets "collectively" sought to explore. Livesay's treatment of it however, is unique.

The poem begins with a dramatic situation in which a person, like one of Caesar's assassins, is called upon by his fellow conspirators to make a choice. The emphasis, however, is not upon the choice he makes but upon the psychological and emotional impact that such a confrontation has upon one's state of mind. The urgency of the request and the seriousness of the consequences cause confusion and a lump in the throat. It is this state of anxiety that Livesay is attempting to establish so she can use its tension as the basis for the second stanza which amplifies it by switching to a more ordinary situation. Here the emphasis is on the state of mind of the child who receives tragic news:

> "Listen child," and you know the message held.
> You face the pitiless eyes and open wide
> Your own, like shock resisters; as they say
> The words no trembling flag of fear could hide:
> "The operation failed. He died today."

Once the emotional atmosphere has been established the poem moves quickly from individual situations of personal concern into wider areas of social implication. The third stanza suggests that "if the words should differ: WAR'S DECLARED, / they make no difference, the thought is one." The person has

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THE FUNCTION OF POETRY AND THE ROLE OF THE POET...

been prepared for the possibility of such news and he faces it with similar emotional trepidation even though when bad news finally arrives it is "the expected shock, the Judas-kiss." The children who have come to maturity during the Thirties have been predestined for such news and conditioned to the possibility of doom because:

> We grew, and munitions matched us, laboratories
> Weighted ingredients: magnifying glass
> Revealed death's desert in a finger nail
> Of dust. Whatever door we sought to pass
> Was marked with chalk: All sesames would fail.

Thus the fourth and fifth stanzas take up the central image of the committee room in which bad news is really "no news but a resolution passed / After hard labour, bitterness of sides." The chairman, mindless of the consequences of their decision, "Smilingly casts his vote, announces death, / Speculates on population where / Our wombs are lacerated." This returns the reader to the implications of the first stanza where the conspirators are gathered for assassination. The child of the poem, as he has grown, has become one of them despite his fears because the decision to declare war impartially involves everyone in the bloody consequences. The lump in the throat remains, however, despite the lessons that this generation has learned about the inevitability of doom. The final stanza of the poem, rather than being a statement of resolution in the face of an annihilating future, is a statement of sympathy and remorse for those who have had their capacity for love, fear, and hope reduced to the stoic understanding that:

> We are children long prepared for dust

Ready in love, the wrist a pulsing pain:
On a precarious railway-tie we lie
Our limbs long ready for the armored train-
Ears to the ground and bare eyes to the sky.

Livesay has portrayed a generation of victims who have been trapped by social circumstances beyond their control. This is a theme which is common to much social poetry of the Thirties. The difference in her expression of it, however, is that she refuses to limit the importance of the subject by resorting to slogans or political invective. Her concern is to represent the tragedy of those who have suffered by focussing upon their emotional and psychological state as individuals rather than upon their role as martyrs in the class struggle or collective heroes in the face of overwhelming opposition. For this reason the poem has an effectiveness which is rare among much of Canadian social verse. Without sentimentality or idealism she has expressed a state of mind which comments indirectly upon a terrible social circumstance. In so doing she has avoided the fault of the majority of revolutionary writers who reversed this procedure and used social and political problems as a basis for generalizing upon the individual human condition. Thus Livesay has achieved some degree of success in illustrating her belief that collectivist subject matter can be dealt with uniquely in poetry providing that the writer has an original method of expression.

This is generally true of all nine poems Dorothy Livesay contributed to New Frontier. All except "Spain" (NF June 1937) are definitely marked by her personality and voice. This small poem illustrates well the kind of collectivist

expression that most of the New Frontier poets achieved. It could have been written by Kennedy or any other of the poets. The fact that Livesay wrote it suggests that the impulse to lionize the Spanish freedom fighters and to justify their sacrifice was always very strong. The thematic pattern is typical of several poems on the subject which appeared in the magazine. The opening stanza implores the world to remember those who are involved in the battle against fascism: "It is for this they fight / It is for hills uncoiling and the green thrust / Of spring, that they lie choked with battle dust." The second stanza continues the thought by reminding those who live in relative peace and "hold beauty at your fingertips / Hold it because the splintering gunshot rips / Between your comrades' eyes." The conclusion provides a denouement by stating explicitly that "You who live quietly in sunlit space / Reading the Herald after morning grace, / Can count peace dear when it has driven / Your sons to struggle for this grim, new heaven." This kind of poetic statement regarding both the literal and symbolic significance of Spain to the generation of the Thirties, is perhaps the most common one in New Frontier. It is important to notice here, however, that such a typical revolutionary poem is the exception in Livesay's case.

"A Mother, 1918" (NF April 1937) is more representative of the kind of poetry Livesay was writing at the time. There is in the poem the same empathetic concentration upon the emotional state of the individual and the same oblique approach to the subject that characterized "Doom Elegy." Here the

character with whom the poet finds a close relationship is a mother who has lost her son during the first world war. Livesay avoids the conflict in Spain and relies upon the universal archetype of the grieving mother to reveal her meaning. She writes the poem in the form of a soliloquy in which the mother observes "Blue from mountain skies" and is overcome with longing for her fallen son, but characteristically she attempts to be emotionally strong in the face of sadness and "In self defense / She closes her / Eyes to spring / Remembering your eyes." She next recalls the year he was summoned to battle "Unsung by anyone / Till smoke deflowered you." She recalls her son in terms of beauty, as a "loveliness" which has been removed from the earth and the mother's final wish, after taking the whole burden of remorse upon herself, is that she could also assume the sadness of the girls he has known who also grieve. The concluding lines express not only the mother's courage but also Livesay's ability to deal poetically with highly emotional subject matter in an extraordinarily sensitive manner. As a poet, she shares that feeling of loss which so many have experienced but because of her strong personality she is able to recreate the experience without sentimentality. Instead, there is genuine compassion for others in the request: "Let me be covering and gown / For girls you knew . . . / Let me alone face burnt-out eyes / Where love had flowers sown." The subject of the poem lends itself easily to melodrama and excess but Livesay remains controlled and economical throughout. She depends upon the understated expression of the

mother's special emotional courage to speak for itself and to indirectly suggest that this is the strength of character necessary to confront the hard times of the Thirties.

Besides being expressions of her individual personality, Livesay's poems also conform to her critical ideals with regard to her constant effort to associate them with "pure ideas." "Doom Elegy" was perhaps, most generally concerned with the meaning of pity, just as "A Mother, 1918" is most generally concerned with the real nature of love. The subject of "Yes!" (NF May 1936) is the existence of beauty. Faced with a society and a life which is ugly, the average man has a need to experience the beautiful. The speaker in the poem is this average man who begins by rationalizing that "There must be beauty somewheres, somewheres, / Kid yourself, keep telling yourself, Kid." This is followed by the image of an airplane flying "relentless to Honolulu" in which the pilot sit contained and in "intimate connection" with his aircraft. Juxtaposed to this is the image of lovers who also understand the experience of union. This understanding of an extremely close relationship between a man and a woman or a man and a machine of his own making is where the essence of the beautiful lies. Only "They know, / They speed in intimate connection / Pilot in plane, man in woman, / There is beauty somewheres." And although beauty itself cannot be clearly defined, they also know that it cannot be found in disparity: "Not a hard street and a smashing hatred / Enemy shoulders brushing / Not a fly teasing your face and gasoline in your nostrils." The beauty that does have its basis of meaning in union is "More than

this blood branch of rowan trees/ More than this wind heavy with hay-scent." It is a reality that only lovers can begin to understand and when it is found it is as "fruit content in a warm womb." This final image combines both the experience of ultimate connection which is beauty and the physical and mental satisfaction which accompanies its experience. Livesay implies that this is the ultimate and natural reality for every man to seek. Despite the ugliness with which they must live and despite the social and political forces which seek to drive men apart, the human spirit naturally tends toward "connection" and "oneness" and in this tendency lies man's relationship with the beautiful. This poem as well as the others indicate the positive attitude with which Livesay's social poems approach the world. She is perhaps the best example of the "progressive" Canadian proletarian writer. Even in the poems which are designed as warnings or as sermons she maintains a positive forceful attitude without restorting to hysterical invective.

"And Still We Dream" (NF October 1936) is Livesay's expression of the call to action which Kennedy voiced in "Calling Eagles." Her poem associates man more closely with nature than with politics. Where Kennedy sees the man of vision as an eagle, Livesay sees him only as a man. Both are called down from the heights to participate in the struggle below but whereas Kennedy could offer only a very general reason why the eagle should become a "groundling," Livesay is quite specific. In the poem, man is seen "dreaming" in his natural state at one with nature "coiled in a mountain crevice"

allowing the sun to "Shift on flesh and bone his subtle fingers." This represents the natural union of man with nature and his natural condition of peace and repose. But the point is that the world has become unnatural and therefore the natural human condition is threatened by forces which are social and political. The dreaming man cannot be warned of these dangers by natural means because "the thrush will never give us warning / His singing will not cease- / The bees will hum all down the darkest morning / Inveigling us to peace." Likewise "The mountains; yearning forward into silence / Have done with shaking." The natural phenomena comprise a vast, ordered system of which man should ideally be a part but man has created a conflict which has thrown him out of harmony with nature and therefore it is only he who "Can have no rest from clash of arms . . . / And the thunder at the throat." Thus man must realize that in these troubled times, "though we dream like lizards on a rock ledge / Suckling the sun's breast- / Manhood and growth are on us." For this reason the speaker advises her comrade that "it is death to rest." It is death to rest because unless he does his part to reorder the universe in such a way that men again can be part of its natural harmony, the day when he may peacefully bask in the sun may never return.

Livesay's poem "Man Asleep"(NF October 1936) which appeared on the same page as "And Still We Dream," affirms her faith in man's ability to rise up and set the world in order. The "man asleep" in this poem has taken on the specific identity of the Spanish partisan guerrilla who is resting

between battles. His peacefulness is deceptive and "Though unresisting while summer's hand / Smooths out your brow, relaxes the stiff bone / And cools the blood" the man is only momentarily unaware that "somewhere the guns command." The phallic imagery suggests that the speaker in the poem may be his lover. Again, it is implied that his condition of peaceful sleep is symbolic of the natural condition of perpetual peace for which he and his comrades are fighting. Livesay's faith in his capability to bring about a better world not only for himself but for all men is the substance of the final stanza: "Now hunched in sleep, you dream the battle's done: / But still your bones shall spring to life like steel / Clamp down on victory, behold the sun!"

"In Preparation," "The Dispossessed," and "In Praise Of Evening," all of which appeared in the February 1937 issue of the magazine, also suggest ways in which men can have hope in times of hardship. "In Preparation" sees darkness as a condition which is necessary if man is to truly appreciate the light: "Without this benefit, the dark / We'd catch no intermittent spark / Of sun shaft hitting out at snow- / This the unshadowed cannot know." Thus the time of darkness can best be understood as a period of preparation for the morning light which will soon appear. She hopes that love will be a "covering as kind" as the darkness and that it will allow men to "Look fearless at these searchlight suns, / Unblinking at the sound of guns." Her wish that men can find hope for the future and the courage to face the present through an understanding of "love" indicates again, her unwillingness

to resort to emotional patriotism and trite slogans. This characteristic is also dominant in "The Dispossessed." Here she has no illusions about the harsh reality with which the dispossessed of the world must live. Love for them must be experienced in "the teeming street" and "the lull of fear" but it is love alone which allows men to survive despite their trials. Thus she asks:

> O come with me and be my love!
> Here in the crowd, break free:
> The world's eye shall our pleasure prove
> And lust at misery.

Her poem "In Praise Of Evening," is similarly concerned with a realistic rather than romantic understanding of the human condition. Rather than suggesting death, the approach of evening affirms her faith in life: "The excitement of evening, bare belief / In living, and thrusting the hand out / In taut silhouette against the sunset / As a tree on the rim of horizon." And it is this "bare belief" in the human will to survive which "will defend us from famine's gesture, / The run on the banks, panic at noonday." So, despite the pain and peril which modern man must endure, Livesay's belief in the strength of the human will allows her to remain sure of his survival.

These poems suggest the very strong faith that Livesay has in the capability of man to overcome any obstacle that might be before him. It is perhaps because of this faith that she is better able than Kennedy to write poetry which is genuinely focussed upon the condition of people other than herself. All of her <u>New Frontier</u> poems except "Spain" are

expressions of a sensitive understanding of the psychological condition of people who are under extreme stress. Unlike Kennedy and most other social poets however, she attempts to meet her own critical standards by refusing to allow propaganda to take control of her poems. For the most part the political or social statement is more implicit than explicit in them. Her optimism and hope seem to be the result of a genuine faith in humanity rather than a passion for the idea of social democratic revolution.

Kennedy and Livesay have in quite different ways and with varying degrees of success, attempted to write poetry which conforms to their critical ideals. Whereas Kennedy's poems are mostly poetic rephrasings of his critical premises, Livesay's manage to transcend this function by centering their attention on human emotions rather than human ideals. What they have in common, however, is the sincere wish to write poetry which makes an immediate comment upon the human social condition by placing "man" rather than nature or their own subjectivity in the foreground. They try as well to make poetry serve the function of confronting human problems rather than offering a romantic retreat from them. They are poets who have chosen to be public and emotional rather than private and austere.

New Frontier published three long poems of over one-hundred lines in length which can, for convenience, be considered together as a group. They include Klein's "Of Daumiers A Portfolio," Kenneth Leslie's "The Censored Editor," and "Deep Cove" by Charles Bruce. "Of Daumiers A Portfolio"

(NF September 1937) was the only poem that A. M. Klein published in the magazine and it is an example of the kind of satire that he was writing during the Thirties. The poem comes closer than any other in the magazine to approaching the kind of broadly based incisive satirical verse that Kennedy proposed should be written by Canadian poets during the period. It takes the form of a portfolio or picture gallery of the various men who hold office in the Canadian judicial establishment and its purpose is to expose the foundation of deceit and corruption upon which the Canadian system of law and order is based. As the title suggests, the inspiration for the poem is drawn from the socially satirical paintings and lithographs of the 19th Century French painter, Honoré Daumier.

The first portrait is that of the judge who has begun his career as a lawyer "married" to the corporations which best endow him. His unfaithfulness to any particular corporation prepares him well for the lies he must tell on the "hustings" when he is seeking the office of judge. No lie is too extreme in his rise to power and the speaker asks the reader to "Behold him in overalls, among the paupers! / I am the toiler's friend! He smiles; he beams." Such deceit brings success and he is finally installed as "The Honorable Mr. Justice Hogarth / Arriving in robes judicial, his new diguise." The following short stanza shows that he is a merciless adjudicator who uses his powerful position to take advantage of the poor and the deprived: "these robbers [who] filched electricity / This is a crime to property! / In jail

for one month let them be, / To privately own their privacy." From here the poem moves to a consideration of the way in which justice is administered in the penal institutions where confessions are obtained by physical force. The prosecuting lawyers also make victims of those who are at a disadvantage. They are men "Who failing arguments acute / Find arguments acuter." The fines law breakers must pay also contribute to the cycle of injustice because legislative action is never taken to improve the social conditions which lead to crime. The money collected simply goes "to build more streets / For streetwalkers to walk," and thus the streetwalker is likened to a civil servant who "keeps the Government." Stanza VI is concerned with the inflexibility of the law which is based upon outdated precedents often found in "tomes where s is f." There is no recourse to special consideration or human sympathy because "The law is certain; and the law is clear." The sin of the detectives who function as "sleuths" for the system is one of pride. Their vanity is revealed in their wish to solve the case as an end in itself regardless of the innocence or guilt of the victim even if they must pin "A rap of arson on a falling star." And finally, Klein offers a portrait of the police constable who once was a "Brass-buttoned blue serged hero of my youth / [who] held me, dried my tears and wiped my nose." The speaker, however, has since come to understand him as a thief who accepts bribes. He is also a man who has come to enjoy violence, a sadist who grins as he wades into the picket lines with his nightstick. The final stanza suggests that justice itself has become "a thing of trade" in modern

urban society. The capitalist ethic has penetrated the social fabric so deeply that even the system which has been developed to preserve individual freedom and integrity has become an instrument of degradation and oppression.

Klein has depicted a hierarchy of corruption which extends from the judge on the bench down to the constable on the beat. This cynicism is intended to indicate just how deeply the social problems of the Thirties were rooted. He implies that the changes that left wing poets and politicians were seeking must be extremely fundamental if society is to be truly just. The satire is also a warning to the generation of the Thirties that all power structures whether they be legal, commercial, or political, should be looked upon with suspicion.

"The Censored Editor" (NF August 1937) by Kenneth Leslie is a dramatic narrative poem which recounts a fictional incident during the Spanish Civil War. The theme of the poem centres upon the question of loyalty to the cause or loyalty to one's own pride. The plot of the narrative, though stated with an unnecessary degree of complexity, is quite simple. Inès is an old woman who is secretly following her son to a clandestine rendezvous in the mountains with a fascist army officer. She has discovered before the action of the poem has begun, that Guido has become a traitor to the Republican cause. Her objective is to eavesdrop on the conversation that he will have with the fascist and then to use her knife to kill him for what he has done. In him she has discovered the headwaters of "A little stream of treachery [which] has run /

out of these hills, a stream her flying knife / must dry up at its source." To carry out her mission, Inès, representing the old true values for which the republicans are fighting, must find the courage to overcome her love for her son who represents the proud, ambitious younger generation which does not always have the strength of moral conviction to place the good of the cause above the need for personal gain. After recounting the life of Guido as a son, a left wing journalist, and finally an editor who has compromised his principles, the speaker in the poem allows us to enter the mind of the old woman in order to experience her struggle with "the angel of forgiveness" which tempts her to abandon her plan. The mother finally does decide to forego the murder in favor of advice which may prevent the exchange of vital information regarding the "disposition" of the republican forces. Just as her son is about to surrender the details, she speaks out as an oracle from among the rocks where she lies hidden. Startled by her voice, Guido responds: "The damned rocks echo so . . . stand out! Your voice / is many voices . . . not that I would fear you / though you should be a mob." She does, of course, represent a "mob" in that her words speak for all who understand the meaning of freedom and are willing to die for it. Her words then take on the form of a prophecy:

> The world's to win for freedom, and though first
> A man must breathe before he can breathe freedom
> yet even should he choose to choke in freedom
> still may he select hate to be his hangman
> that so his death may advertise his master.

Inès' final advice is given in the form of a parable which she hopes her son will tell his "blind" instructor who

is both the fascist general and his deceitful pride which "would bespeak the patience of the poor." The parable is that of a team of mountain climbers who fall because "One puffing fool / flings out his arm to point the distant view." This is, of course, what Guido is doing. By being a traitor he not only destroys himself as a man but also creates the possibility that many more men who represent a greater good may also be destroyed by "one who was a twofold enemy and traitor, / betraying beauty and its living hosts." Thus the old woman censors the conversation between her son and the fascists and prevents the exchange of information from taking place.

In this poem Kenneth Leslie has attempted to express the universal ideal of freedom that the military struggle in Spain had come to represent to left wing poets in Canada. He is closer to Dorothy Livesay than to Kennedy in his technique because the real action of the poem lies in the old woman's emotional conflict concerning the just action she must take against her son rather than in the blatant propaganda with which the poem concludes. Leslie has chosen to identify closely with her character in order to suggest both her humanity and her unshakeable devotion to the true cause of freedom. The tension created between her strength and Guido's compromising weakness accounts for whatever aesthetic success the poem achieves. By working toward his political and social statement through the realistic interpretation of the human personality, Leslie is consistent with the primary critical ideal of <u>New Frontier</u> which proposed that the condition of

man be the fundamental subject matter of revolutionary verse.

The third of these longer poems is Charles Bruce's "Deep Cove" (NF June 1937). It is most significant to the present study because it is directly concerned with the theme of the role of the artist and the function of art in the society of the 1930's. Bruce's artist is a sculptor who has reached a point of crisis in his creative life. His inspiration has disappeared and he must now face life with "the mind an empty pocket, the heart blind, / The fingers quick no more on living clay." In order to console himself he has returned to the natural environment and the simple life of Deep Cove which was his birth place. Here he can feel at peace with the elements of earth, air, and sea and he can relieve his spirit of the anguish and disillusionment which has come "of carving life and drawing its blunt line / So near the truth that even his own eyes / Feared the sharp candor, the clear design." His problem is that he has always been a realistic artist who "tried to show life as it is, / Sieze in the clay my fingers touched a true / Picture of men and women in their time." But depicting life realistically has become painful for him and his dilemma now involves his inability to represent "life as it is" any longer while at the same time understanding that this is the only truth "worth showing." What he must discover is a new motivation for his creativity, a new premise on which to base his art. This he finds through his experience with the simple people of Deep Cove. They appear tranquil and free but he soon discovers that in reality they too are people whose "words are borrowed

from the slang of cities, / Their conduct settled by a rigid code, / Given them variously at church and school." The townspeople are, in fact, living the same petty and rigidly structured lives as the people in the cities. They "have been cut and dried to shape / By little rules long rooted in their flesh." Thus the artist's epiphany occurs with the realization that:

> When I shaped life I shaped the stolid Cove:
> Now it is something else that wakes and calls:
> A will to make the chiselled book complete,
> To write your message on the plastic page;
> Not to show life's unfolding as it is
> But as it can be.

His awareness of the new idealistic direction his art must take comes most directly from his relationship with his childhood sweetheart, Mary, who alone among the people of Deep Cove has retained her innocent vitality and love of life. The artist realizes that he must create an art which will show the same fundamental harmony between man and nature that Mary's living example provides. By using his art to show life as it "can be" rather than as "it is," he hopes that he will be able to contribute something towards the day when people like those of Deep Cove learn to know themselves as free men who share with each other a universal oversoul. When that day arrives men everywhere will live by "the day and the moment and a man's own strength" and they will share the wisdom that:

> A man's conviction that the man next door
> And the one next to him, and he himself,
> Are all joined branches in the growth of life;
> That no one living can be set apart
> From any other living—even the dead
> Live on in us through strange and tenuous threads;

> The children our women carry here on the beach
> Go back to the den . . . and on to a far door.

But only the combination of "Beauty and life together, / Can make men feel akin to everything / And glad to know it." In order that this ideal world can come into being then, there must be art which depicts the potential beauty of life rather than its painful, immediate reality. There must also, however, be people who are able to show through the example of their own life style the possibilities which are available to everyone.

Bruce's artist has come to understand his role to be that of a prophet. For him the function of art is to reveal the possibilities that life offers those who have the strength of conviction to bring about social change. Rather than dealing directly with the imperfect reality of the contemporary world, the artist in the poem chooses to be progressive in the extreme. His creations will serve the purpose of providing a utopian vision of a world where all men are in harmony with nature and thereby are in harmony with themselves. This is a somewhat different view of the function of art than that taken by Kennedy and other New Frontier critics who stressed the immediate social relevance for which art should strive. Their view suggests that it should serve its social purpose by realistically portraying the injustices that lead to human oppression and by identifying sympathetically with the people who have become victimized. The left wing Canadian critics understand art as a means by which the anguish of contemporary society may be dramatised so that alternatives

may be more clearly seen. Bruce's artist however, takes the view that art can be most beneficial if it provides examples of life as it could be if society were truly just. Kennedy would agree with Bruce's attempt to depict art as a medium through which individuals can look deeply at themselves and thereby modify their system of values. He would disagree strongly, however, with Bruce's concept of an art based upon ideal subjects rather than the real. Bruce, in fact, published two short poems in the magazine which explain his difference of opinion with Kennedy. Both poems appeared in the February, 1937 issue and are prefaced by Kennedy's description of Bruce as "one still unaware of immediates." In the first poem entitled "Immediates," he points out "That justice and injustice grow / Not from the system but the man," and he tells Kennedy that the understanding of what is immediately important is relative to particular circumstances. Bruce's other poem, "Alternative," suggests that since the only "Immediates" are "birth and sickness and death," it is therefore necessary to base one's art upon the connotations of these universal truths rather than upon political propaganda. His wish is to be free of the narrow limits afforded by "Protest and studied invective" and to remain aware that "There is virtue too in a gray and dragonish sea." These two short poems by Charles Bruce can thus be seen as additional commentaries on the aesthetic ideas proposed in "Deep Cove."

From the three long poems which expressed their respective themes in terms of satire, parable, and the figure of the artist, it is now necessary to turn to a discussion of the

thematic elements of the short poems by various authors which were published in New Frontier. Most of these poems are concerned with the attempt to make an artistic statement by concentrating on the reality of the contemporary social situation. None, in fact, take the artistic direction posed by Bruce in "Deep Cove."

The only women other than Dorothy Livesay to publish poems in the magazine were Genevieve Taggard and Margaret Day. Both of their poems present a glimpse of the ideal world but both also suggest that the chaotic reality of the contemporary world makes the possibility that such a world may some day exist extremely remote. Taggard's poem "Night Letter To Walt Whitman"(NF June 1936), contrasts the chaos into which the contemporary world has fallen with Whitman's ideal vision of an harmonious democracy. She employs the central image of city and land as brother and sister who have become sick and "are going to die." The cities that the indifferent world "smiles on" have become "radio-infested rooms . . . ugly and elaborate they snort / Growl snore a few great motors purr luxurious . . . swarming terminals / Sullen and meek with gun-men wealth spiced with want streets / Strewn with refuse." Man and his technology have made the cities chaotic night-mares just as nature with "her green idiot smile" has turned the countryside into an infertile wasteland- "A dirty wench a slut farms and mills deadlocked / Corn none Cotton none Hogs none Cloth none." The speaker in the poem wishes for a reordered universe with "The sister's arm around the city the athlete boy / Clean able quick both lavish with goods and

peace." But it is a foolish ideal and the poem returns at the end to the immediate reality which cannot be escaped; the meaningless present where "Bla Bla / The radio coos his blather dope / On the badland / The thistle / Scatters / Wrong."

The terrible circumstances of contemporary society are also the subject of Margaret Day's "Ode to Spring, 1937" (NF July-August 1937). Despite its melodramatic overstatement and archaic language, the poem expresses the stultifying effects that the social and political events have upon the creative imagination. The poet wishes to write an ode to spring but is prevented from creative "flight" by the negative images of the "Jackal, cormorant and kite." She realizes that the compassionate god "with dewy locks" who benevolently brings the promise of spring is also a "tiger burning bright" who is capable of vengeance. Thus she is unable to receive creative inspiration from the passing of winter because, as she observes, "While horror whistles down in Spain / Who can announce a Canadian spring?" It is notable that along with Bruce's "Deep Cove" the other poems which most directly view their world as being out of harmony with the natural order of the universe are those written by women. Livesay, Day, and Taggard all see their environment as evidence of a world which has fallen from order into chaos. Their poems imply a more comprehensive awareness of the role of the revolutionary whether he be poet, politician, or soldier: that of aiding in the restoration of social harmony between men so that the world of man's creation may again be congruent with the greater

order of the natural universe. The poems by Taggard and Day are less important as literature than as indications that the Canadian poets of the Thirties were capable of seeing their troubled world not only in terms of human failure and stupidity but also in terms of natural indifference and malevolence.

Stephen Spender's "Two Speeches" from his play "Death Of A Judge" (NF May 1937) indicate that as an English poet, he tended to view the world in a similar fashion. The footnote to the poem explains that the play had for its origin the Potempa trials which took place in Germany in 1933 just before Hitler came to power. In these two short speeches from it, Spender is concerned with describing the kind of faith which will allow men to courageously face death and oppression at the hands of the Nazis. It is significant that his hero speaks the following words before his death: "Do not say / I was unhappy, I built my mind / In the foundation of that world / Which grows against chaos and shall be happiness." Spender is articulating explicitly the theme which the women poets of New Frontier were content to imply: that man's true strength lies in his natural love of order and hatred of chaos.

Spender's poems, though positive, tend more towards pathos than exuberant idealism. A. M. Stephen's poem "Madrid" (NF May 1937), suggests a less controlled way of dealing with the subject. Here the speaker describes the visitor's superficial, romantic view of revolutionary Spain as a "castle of delight, / We built of visions wrought on air." The outsider cannot "feel the hunger grim / Or [the] ancient burden of

despair" which is at the root of the Spanish experience. Therefore he is misled by appearances to see only "bewitching feet, / Dark eyes that gleamed, the saraband / Of youth and glamour flood the street." The reality of the Spanish experience, however, is brought violently to the speaker's attention in the second part of the poem when he observes Madrid while it is under seige. Now the city has become a place where "Red death is arm-in-arm with hate— / Hate of the creeping Fascist horde, / The Beast that crouches at the gate." The contrast allows the speaker to be more aware of the spiritual and physical suffering that the Spanish must endure but, unlike Margaret Day or Genevieve Taggard, he is not led to despair of a universe ruled by indifferent gods. Instead, Stephen uses the situation in the manner of Leo Kennedy, concluding with the hysterical affirmation that "They shall not fail! A myriad of hands / Outstretch from earth and sea and sky— / The armies of the worker's dead— / Acclaim the cause that will not die."

Such blind optimism, though occasionally present in New Frontier, is not consistently evident. Poems like Vincent Ferrini's "Shadows of Guns" and R. E. Warner's "Arms In Spain" tend to rely solely upon representations of the negative aspects of contemporary reality for their impact. Their method is to depict chaos and allow it to speak for itself. "Shadows of Guns" (NF May 1936) for example, presents a world in which the technology of the war industry has driven men apart from each other to such an extent that all is nightmare:

While we sleep unsleeping hours and travel grey days,
All we own is thoughts, hungry mouths, and people die,
Huge plants of terror silently work morning, noon,
And night manufacturing gas bombs, tanks, with frightening
Precision, in the heart of towns and cities under the
black sun.
The tense taut air of the End; our lives under them, felt
and seen
Everywhere. The sick sight of troopers, khaki shirts, dumb
machines. Our pregnant world locked in cells of doom . . .

This is the vision of the real world that led the fictional artist of Bruce's "Deep Cove" into despair and creative impotence. Unlike him, however, most of the New Frontier poets continued to carry out their function by dealing with the world as it is rather than as it should be.

Warner's "Arms In Spain" (NF September 1937) provides a further example of this. The poem deals explicitly with the perverse reasons behind Italy's provision of weapons to Franco's army. They are given "So that men might remain slaves, and that the little good / they hoped for might be turned all bad and the iron lie / stamped and clamped on growing, tender and vigorous / truth." Although the poem is not as realistically descriptive of the chaotic present as Ferrini's, it does suggest that the reasons for supplying arms to the oppressors is "So that the drunken General and the Christian millionaire / might continue to rule blindly in complete darkness." The danger of such weapons therefore does not lie so much in their potential for destroying human bodies so much as in their ability to destroy the human spirit and perpetuate the forces of darkness and chaos.

Poems which similarly described contemporary violence were contributed to the magazine by such noted English pro-

letarian poets as C. Day Lewis and John Cornford as well as Stephen Spender. Cornford's "A Letter From Aragon" (NF October 1937) relies not only upon realistic description for its effect but also upon a Kafkaesque tone of understated calm. The horror of the poem is generated by the implications which arise from the repeated refrain: "This is a quiet section of a quiet front." The refrain is used to set off stanzas which describe isolated incidents of human suffering which, in the context of the whole Spanish Civil War, would at first appear inconsequential. Cornford, however, succeeds in showing that the real anguish of war is best communicated through immediate microcosmic examples of human indignity. Using a cinematic technique he allows the reader to experience three incidents which include the burial of a comrade; frightened women running out into the street during a bombing raid; and a wounded soldier screaming in pain. The reality of death during the burial is emphasized by such details as: "the shroud was too small and his washed feet stuck out," and the fact that "the stink of his corpse came through the clean pine boards / And some of the bearers wrapped handkerchiefs around their faces." In the second incident we are told that "Women came screaming out of the crumbling houses, / Clutched under one arm the naked rump of an infant." This is followed by the screams of the soldier who is "strong against death, but unprepared for such pain." Cornford, however, is unable to let the images speak entirely for themselves. He cannot resist the sentimental and moral conclusion which weakens so much of proletarian poetry be it Canadian or otherwise. As

the speaker leaves the hospital he shakes the hand of an "Anarchist worker" who leaves him with a message for those at home:

> . . . tell the workers of England
> This was a war not of our own making
> We did not seek it.
> But if ever the Fascists again rule Barcelona
> It will be as a heap of ruins with us workers beneath it.

Cornford successfully deals with realistic subject matter in the poem but is not able to subdue the stronger impulse to fulfill his role as explicit propagandist. As with most other New Frontier poets, his obligation to society is greater than his obligation to art.

"Bombers" (NF October 1937) by C. Day Lewis which recreates the ominous fear that comes with the sound of approaching enemy aircraft, is a more finely crafted poem than Cornford's. The bombers, described as "heavy angels carrying harm in / Their wombs that ache to be rid of death," are the messengers of destruction which lead the speaker to observe that their example must force the victims toward a profound understanding of the futility of war. Day Lewis phrases this in the form of a concluding question which applies to victors and victims alike:

> Choose between your child and this fatal embryo.
> Shall your guilt bear arms, and the sons you want
> Be condemned to die by the powers you paid for
> And haunt the houses you will never build?

Thus, one of the common methods by which the poetry of New Frontier meets the demands of its critics is by representing reality, and especially the condition of war, in terms of the most frank and brutal imagery possible. Few of the poets

however, are willing to let the resulting picture stand alone. The general tendency is to provide a specific moral or political comment by which their representations of the world can be judged.

The English group of social poets of the Thirties influenced the left wing poetry of New Frontier just as they influenced the poetry of American magazines such as New Masses and The New Republic. Although they were not represented by a large number of poems in New Frontier it is perhaps surprising that they were represented at all. C. A. Millspaugh's poems "History With Prayer" (NF March 1937) which is an admonition that history record the good rather than the bad, and "Poem" (NF January 1937) which deals clumsily with the hope that good will someday come from present evil, are the most clear indication of the desperation with which some Canadian poets attempted to emulate the complexity and profundity of the MacSpaunDay group. These two poems camouflage the obvious in such diffuse language and metaphor that they drew a satiric poem in response among the letters to the editor in the New Frontier of May 1937. Although the poem, entitled "Reader's Lament," belabors the point that Millspaugh is representative of proletarian poets in England, the United States, and Canada who wrote in a manner too complex for the average reader's comprehension, the fact is that Millspaugh is the exception in New Frontier. The majority of the poems show a definite attempt to deal with their various subjects as directly as possible. In general, the poetry of New Frontier conforms well to the purpose of providing social commentary

which is uncluttered by diffuse language or oblique perspective.

Apart from those poems which rely upon realistic description of abhorrent social conditions to imply their critical statement, there are several poems in the magazine which provide direct commentary upon the effects that the revolutionary environment has upon the individual. These poems often serve as vehicles for the expression of moral convictions. Alan Creighton's little poem "Conference" (NF June 1936), for example, questions the morality of bringing children into the confusion of the contemporary world. Sexual impulse is described as "The age-long urge of lover-flow [which] comes deep and wild," but the lovers must ask themselves whether they should "let it roll us so / To form a child?" They must be aware of the possibility that to give birth to children is to condemn them to a life in "steel-bound lands" where they may only "live as dull, unwanted flesh."

"Scarlet Manna" (NF April 1937) by Gordon LeClaire is a similarly brief poem which deals with the often shallow "official" gestures which attempt to ennoble those who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom. In this case it is the act of bringing "A flagon of saffron grain" from the fields of Vimy to Gaspé in order to plant it in memory of the Canadians who died there- "A 'beau geste' to honor the dead." Seeing the hollowness of such a retrospective gesture, the speaker in the poem hopes that "no kernel be ground from the spot / lest we choke on a crust of bread."

Another poem by LeClaire is an "Admonition" (NF June 1937) dedicated to "any adolescent" in which he advises the youth of the Thirties to "marry young . . . While spring breathes a rose mist / Upon life's quickened mirror." It continues the carpe diem theme by warning that the future may not offer any happiness when "Millions are doled relief; / War looms on all horizons, / [and] Drought sears the unswathed sheaf." He concludes by suggesting that the adolescent use "finesse" in playing life's game so that he will not become a victim who is simply "Farrow for the breadlines / Or fodder for the war." In Aaron Rosen's "The Egotists" (NF February 1937), advice is offered not to children but to those "cushioned soft, our half-hog humans" who are interested only in serving themselves. The danger he warns of is two-fold in that they will be damned for their self interest and, more significantly, that they will eventually betray themselves "to end as fascist meat, / hung like a butchered rabbit by your feet."

A similar theme is the subject of E. J. Pratt's "Text On The Oath" which appeared with his "Seen On The Road" in the May 1936 issue of New Frontier. "Text On The Oath" raises the question of the kind of oath the soldier really takes when he enlists to fight for his country. Choosing to go to war and to become indoctrinated with the ideology and skill necessary to military success may at first appear noble and romantic but in actuality the training is based on the simple premise of "kill or be killed." The speaker in the poem explains his meaning to the young romantic recruit by relating the story of another eager youth who "wrote his lesson on a

slate / Composed of foreign names to spell / These to defend and these to hate, / And at the barracks learned it well." His moment of glory comes when he is rewarded for valor in the field and Pratt ironically suggests that although the honor he has received is seen by his colleagues and countrymen as a reward for dedication and courage, it is in actuality a reward for being brutal and inhuman: "They pinned a medal on his breast / Behind the lines one afternoon: / He had from a machine gun nest / Annihilated a platoon." Thus Pratt advises the young man who is anxious to serve his country that he had best give careful consideration to the true values on which war is based before choosing to enlist for reasons that are romantic and naive.

"Seen On The Road" is an attack upon those regressive "pundits" who foster such idealistic blindness in the younger generation. They are the men who "Lectured that the world [is] young / As ever, frisking like a springtime colt / Around the sun, his mother." The wise student however, sees quite clearly that this is not a true picture of the world of the Thirties. He sees it more realistically as a "wastrel drawn / Along a road with many a pitch and bump / By spavined mules—this very day at dawn! / And heading for the ammunition dump."

These are the type of poems, then, which serve their function by questioning the system of established values through personal, subjective expressions of the poet's belief. Rather than relying upon hysterical idealism, harsh invective, stark realism, or the depiction of a world fallen into chaos, they attempt to indicate in a small way the areas in which

the moral foundation of society has been weakened.

Other types of poems which attempt to serve similar ends are those devoted to portraits of personalities whose actions in some way comment upon revolutionary ideals. These poems vary in tone and seriousness. Parker Tyler's "The Economist" (NF October 1936) is an example of the more whimsical approach to a fundamentally serious problem. Its subject is Mary Lou Wiggam, a wall-street typist whose breasts succeed in "Accruing steady interest" despite the collapse of the stock exchange. As a person, however, she is a cheap commodity which is transferred from bank-clerk to bank-clerk. As the speaker passes her in the street it is only "Her breasts straight and high" which remain "Unborrowing, unbroken from the height of the crash / Where the last bank-clerk cast her." The poem, based upon a series of mixed metaphors, is poorly executed but its effort to comment upon the effect the depression had upon the lives of people like Mary Lou Wiggam, is not entirely wasted.

A. J. M. Smith contributed two poems of this kind to New Frontier. "Son And Heir" appeared in the July 1936 issue and "The Natural" was published in the September number of that year. The central figure in "The Natural" is different from the characters in the other poems of this type because he represents an emotional and intellectual attitude rather than a physical being. The "Natural" is any man, including the speaker in the poem, who "visits timidly the big world of / the heart and stares a little while at love." He is the embodiment of the innocence with which all men, regardless of

their experience, attempt to understand the emotion of love. He tends to approach it romantically as a "seascape whence escapes a new, untrue / refracted light, a shade or two above the infra-fringe beyond which he does move." Being a man of the physical world who is unfamiliar with the "world of the heart" he feels somewhat out of place there and therefore "moves unsurely in an air askew." The second stanza describes the man as a "pretty simpleton" and concentrates upon the identification of the thing he wishes to gain by his examination of his emotions. It may be a Venus-figure "foam-born rising . . . nude and swell," but his experience in the real contemporary world causes him to doubt the possibility that the encounter with love can produce an experience which is so beautiful. Thus he approaches the "world of the heart" with trepidation and the fear that he will meet only with censure and harsh words such as those which close the poem: "Back to your kennel, varlet! Fool, you rave! / Unbind that seaweed, throw away that shell." Contemporary society has conditioned man to understand that even the appreciation of beauty may have negative consequences. The poem implies, therefore, that under negative social circumstances a sincere wish to understand the positive fundamental truths of the heart requires an extraordinary measure of nerve.

Smith's other poem, "Son And Heir," is a family portrait which functions as a satiric attack upon the standard middle-class attitude that offspring naturally inherit the traditional values and aspirations of their parents. Smith likens the parents' long range optimism regarding the kind of individual

their son will become to a well produced scenario. The parents are seen as press agents who "concoct a brave, politic sham / To ravel the plot, feature the smirking star." They turn him into a "he-god" who will give "his old dad / Market tips; and cigars on Father's Day," a young man who is "always sure of the thing he supposes." It is this image of naive pride that Smith deflates. He accomplishes this by presenting the more real possibility that the child, being in fact "an ordinary son-of-a-bitch," will grow up in a different world which will offer only "empty years, the hand to mouth, / The moving cog, the unattended loom, / The breastless street, and lolling summer's drouth." The depression years, he suggests, should be taken seriously as portents of a bleak future. If people like the parents of the poem continue in their refusal to face the painful reality which surrounds them, there will be little chance of social reform and a better world for their children.

"Southern Labour Organizer" (NF September 1936) by Maxwell Bodenheim is probably the best example of this type of moral character study. The poem relates the courage and conviction with which a labour organizer withstands torture at the hands of the capitalist plantation owners and returns as soon as his wounds have healed to join with the share-croppers in their fight for justice and social dignity. His suffering is described in considerable detail:

> They made
> Your blood gush to the swampy ground,
> They hacked your flesh with whip and blade.
> Their hope was that you would confess
> Sharecropper's names, throw year long friends

To quick death or a crouching press.
Where copperheads and slime contend.
The seconds dragged before you lapsed
To blackness, but they met the strength,
The swing of mind the flesh collapsed . . .

The speaker continues by explaining that the man's ability to endure and remain silent arises not from animal courage but from the moral conviction that his cause is too important to betray. Once he recovers and returns to his job of organizing the sharecroppers, he is presented not as a leader whose character is superior to those he leads, but as a man whose fortitude is an "Accepted item in the lives / Of people steeped within a pure / Slow zeal where great endurance thrives / To be unflattered and obscure." He is the kind of man that Leo Kennedy asked for in "Calling Eagles": a man who has chosen to join with the "groundlings." Because he has done this the labor organizer is able to communicate with the farmers so that they can achieve solidarity and develop "hearts resolved to act." Thus Bodenheim gives the reader a portrait of a character who embodies all the noble qualities of the devoted revolutionary. The technique allows him to provide a tangible example of selfless devotion to the common good which is in keeping with the didactic function that proletarian poetry was meant to fulfill.

A final portrait with a less serious tone is drawn in Henry Salt's "New Form For The Swearing-In Of Constables" (NF February 1937). The poem is a reprint of one quoted by William Morris in 1887 and it satirically describes the attitude of the magistrate employed by a government which is entirely devoted to oppression and tyranny:

"Dost thou accept the old creed of coercion
  In England, as in Ireland, tried and true?
Dost thou regard all freedom with aversion,
  And hate her name?" "I do."
"Wilt thou respect, court, venerate the classes,
  What'er they seek to compass—good or ill?
Wilt thou molest and vilify the masses
  In word and deed?" "I will."
"Swear'st thou to wield thy truncheon for the Tory;
  To smite, and curse, and wound, and overbear?
Then seize and prosecute with lying story
  Some injured wretch?" "I swear."

Three of the six poems translated from Spanish which were published in the magazine are also based upon the actions of individual men. In this case, however, all are intended to eulogize fellow comrades who have lost their lives. "Death Of The Innkeeper 'Quitapenas'" (NF June 1937) and "Ascaso" (NF May 1937) by Raphael Beltran Logrono, are similar in technique and theme. The former poem asks the customers of the innkeeper to remember his hospitality now that the fascists have murdered him. The poet hopes that by remembering "the joyful shouting of his inn," the people may better appreciate the purpose for which they are fighting. "Ascaso" recounts the heroic manner in which Ascaso led the attack upon the Atarazanas barracks in Barcelona. His actions symbolize the kind of commitment to liberty from which all men may draw inspiration. In characteristically direct fashion, the poem states that "liberty is not achieved / without sacrifice; it was necessary / to give his life and he gave it all." The third poem of this type is "Elegies On The Death Of A Miner" (NF May 1937) by Pla y Beltran. It laments the death of a man who was "Born for the sun, not for the mine," by means of three impressionistic lyrics which corres-

pond to morning, afternoon, and evening.

These poems were published by the editors of New Frontier as examples of revolutionary writing which arose from first hand experience of the war in Spain. Having no doubt lost a great deal through translation, they compare rather poorly with many of the other poems of the magazine. They impress the reader as obvious and sentimental expressions which too easily drift into the realm of jingoism and the political slogan. This is also true of the other translations. "My Suffering" (NF January 1937), "Ballad" (NF January 1937), and "This Is How We Live" (NF June 1937), are all rather self indulgent overstatements of the anxiety which results from the experience of seeing one's own country destroyed by war. These poems, however, are perhaps the best evidence of the editors' desire to print verse which dealt earnestly and emotionally with the most extreme social and political upheavals. S. I. Hayakawa expressed hope for these same Spanish patriots in his "Poem For Courage" which appeared in the September 1936 issue. His hope was that they would be able to draw inspiration and physical courage from the historical martyrs who also "fought for love, for mercy, for brotherhood," and it is the voices of the Spanish patriots who utter his final plea:

> O shieldless champions! O fighters who fought with prayer!
> O you who endured straight-lipped rope, faggot, and engine!
> Stand by us now whom terror freezes facing
> The savage stammering Lewis-guns.

The Spanish poems serve their proletarian purpose despite the modest level of artistic excellence they achieve because they

represent a cry from the heart of a people who had come to symbolize the purpose behind the whole progressive movement.

This thematic study of the ways in which the poetry of New Frontier reflects the magazine's critical attitudes toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet allows some general conclusions to be drawn. The poetry most closely conforms to the critical directives in its tendency toward an emotional, public kind of speech rather than the subjective, austere response to objective reality which was fostered in the 1920's through the influence of Eliot and Pound. This poetic direction has positive implications in the fact that the social poetry of New Frontier is based upon the progressive desire to turn "outward" and, through compassion for others, to take the condition of common man for its subject matter. This poetic attitude is in opposition to the aesthetic of l'art pour l'art which places the poet in the "ivory tower" tradition where he is an aloof creator for whom art often replaces life. The New Frontier poetry, however, reflects the point of view that the poet must not only participate in the social, political, and literary life around him, but must also use the substance of his environment as the realistic subject matter of his verse. It is evident from the examples which have been discussed that this can be accomplished in several ways; the most common of which involve either realistically describing the burden of social injustice under which the average man suffered during the Thirties and thereby criticizing the social-political system, or striking out against oppression by means of satire or

hysterical invective. Another more artistically demanding method, best used in New Frontier by Dorothy Livesay, is to allow the reader to enter the mind of the individual in order to provide insight into his emotional and psychological condition. Social poetry of the first two types tends in the weakest examples toward jingoism and sloganeering; that of the third type which depends upon emotional empathy, often deteriorates into self indulgence, pathos, and sentimentality. But the main intentional thrust of the poetry, regardless of its aesthetic excellence, is toward a realistic confrontation of life rather than an idealistic retreat from it. This too is in keeping with the poetic principles outlined by the New Frontier critics. There is a paradox, however, in the fact that the poets who became over zealous in their desire to speak publicly in favor of social change and a better future either found themselves presenting a picture of an ideal world of social harmony populated by perfect people, or idealizing actual soldiers, miners, laborers, and artists to the point of making them grotesque. It is significant, however, that the poets represented in New Frontier seem to have seriously attempted to fulfill their chosen role as participants in the social struggle and as educators who wished to inform their readers by heightening their awareness of the reality of contemporary life. This was the artistic role outlined specifically in Kennedy's "Direction For Canadian Poets" and implicitly in much of the other criticism which appeared in the magazine.

It is perhaps too easy to point out the various ways

in which this social poetry is artistically inadequate, but two major failings are generally evident. Because of the revolutionary conviction shared by most of the poets and the fact that they were dealing with highly charged subject matter, there is often a tendency toward overstatement. This is an illustration of the fact that literary propaganda is seldom compatible with emotional restraint and economical use of language. The other major weakness in the poetry is a corollary to this: it is the tendency to "put the cart before the horse" with regard to the means by which the poem should communicate with the reader. Bergum suggested in the November 1936 edition of New Frontier that no art can serve a "collective" cause unless it succeeds first as a means of heightening individual consciousness.[125] The New Frontier poets frequently violate this principle because of their inability to make the collective service to the cause in their poetry subordinate to its primary function of heightening individual consciousness. In short, the poets generally allow their devotion to the progressive cause to interfere with their duty to communicate with the individual reader. Since their artistic motivation stems from a collective ideal, the individual reader often is left with the impression that he is only an anonymous member of a vast crowd to whom the poet is speaking. Thus the major paradox and the fundamental irony of the social poetry of New Frontier is that although its entire rationale is toward returning poetry to the public by placing its emphasis on the condition of individual man, it fails to communicate with the reader on a personal level.

The difficulty is one with which most of the critics concerned themselves: that of writing poetry which unites aesthetic excellence with utilitarian purpose. Very few poets in New Frontier succeed in this respect but writers who seriously attempted to combine these two qualities certainly played a part in changing the course of development of Canadian poetry during the Thirties by causing poets to re-evaluate both their role as artists in society and the aesthetic and political function their art should perform.

New Frontier emerged in 1936 as a magazine which was dedicated to the task of publicizing the progressive left wing attitude toward culture and politics which characterized the radical element in the revolutionary ethos of the period. The poetry that it published was in the tradition of proletarian writing which had grown up in Europe and the United States and as such it was characteristic of its time. In Canada, however, the writing represented the political and aesthetic attitudes of the radical minority. In his wider concern with the poetry published during the Thirties by the more conservative Canadian Forum, Stevens was led to the conclusion that "Canadian poets felt themselves removed from the intrigue of European power politics and revolutions."[126] Although this is perhaps true of Canadian poetry generally during the Thirties, this study has shown that it is far from the truth with regard to the poets who published their work in New Frontier. This is because the editors of the magazine refused to compromise their Marxist principles with regard to politics or poetry by publishing work which was not at

least related inspirationally to their critical beliefs. In this way, and also because of its disinterest in commercial patronage, New Frontier unlike Canadian Forum, served the function of a little magazine during the short period of its existence. It attempted to quicken public interest in those social and literary reforms which the editors considered vital to the creation of a better world. They were dedicated to opposing the kind of complacency which viewed the depression philosophically and accepted the attitude expressed by one reviewer in the Canadian Forum who commented with regard to a book outlining the potential dangers of Naziism: "I refuse to take the book or its author . . . very seriously . . . for I cannot believe that all intelligence has vanished from Germany overnight."[127] Thus, New Frontier can be understood as the forerunner of the militant little magazines which appeared in Canada during the 1940's. The pervasive awareness of the need for reform which characterized the Thirties and found its most extreme expression in the pages of New Frontier, resulted in a renewed concern with the function of poetry and the role of the poet and this in turn eventually led to the resurgence of literary vitality in the Forties. In this regard, Stevens has drawn attention to an article published by John Sutherland in 1951[128] in which he discusses the influence of the writing of the Thirties upon that of the Forties, as follows: "the work produced by the younger poets in the first few years of the Forties, was in part a development of a tendency already quite apparent in the thirties . . . the political theme had been announced, in some cases calamitously,

and with no concerted voice: its full expression had to wait until the Forties." It was New Frontier that most boldly announced this political theme and most directly fostered renewed interest in ideas about poetry which shortly after found expression in the first Canadian little magazines.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter II

[1]Editorial, New Frontier (April 1936), p. 1.

[2]Canadian Poetry Magazine (January 1936-August 1968).

[3]New Provinces (Toronto: Macmillan, 1936).

[4]The White Savannahs (Toronto: Macmillan, 1936).

[5]F. W. Watt, Abstract to "Radicalism In English Canadian Literature Since Confederation," Diss. University of Toronto, 1957.

[6]Desmond Pacey, "The Canadian Writer And His Public," Royal Society of Canada Proceedings (June 1956), p. 17.

[7]Pacey, p. 17.

[8]F. W. Watt, "Literature Of Protest," Literary History of Canada (Toronto 1965), p. 496.

[9]Watt, p. 496.

[10]Seymour Martin Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (New York, 1968), p. 113.

[11]Dean E. McHenry, The Third Force In Canada: The C.C.F. 1932-1948 (Toronto, 1950), p. 113.

[12]Martin Robin, Radical Politics And Canadian Labor 1880-1930 (Kingston, 1968), p. 276.

[13]Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, p. 113.

[14]Watt, "Radicalism In English Canadian Poetry Since Confederation," pp. 246-247.

[15]Watt, Literary History Of Canada, p. 496.

[16]Dorothy Livesay, Selected Poems 1926-1956 (Toronto, 1957), p. 18.

[17]D. W. Linnemeier, Canadian Forum (March 1934), p. 214.

[18]Helen Geddes, Canadian Forum (February 1934), p. 176.

[19]New Frontier (September 1936), p. 11.

[20]The poem first appeared in Canadian Forum (August 1932), pp. 424-25. Collected in New Provinces (Toronto, 1936); cited by Miriam Waddington in A. M. Klein (Toronto, 1970), pp. 32-38.

[21]New Provinces, p. 36.

[22]New Provinces, p. 37.

[23]James H. Gray, The Winter Years (Toronto, 1966), p. 86.

[24]Gerald S. Graham, "Canada And Canadian History As Viewed From The United Kingdom," Regionalism And The Canadian Community, Mason Wade, ed. (Toronto, 1969), p. 281.

[25]Cecil Day Lewis, A Hope For Poetry (Oxford, 1935), p. 53.

[26]Fred Hodgson, "Leftward Ho!," New Frontier (September 1936), p. 10.

[27]See John W. Bennet and Cynthia Krueger, "Agrarian Pragmatism and Radical Politics," in Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, p. 350.

[28]Gray, The Winter Years, p. 86.

[29]C. B. Macpherson, Democracy In Alberta (Toronto, 1953), p. 95.

[30]D. G. Sandilands, "The Leaven Works In Alberta," New Frontier (April 1937), p. 7.

[31]Anne Marriott, The Wind Our Enemy (Toronto, 1939).

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CHAPTER III

MAGAZINES OF THE FORTIES: "THE FEEL OF PEOPLE"

The demise of *New Frontier* in October of 1937 left Canada without a publication which could provide a consistent outlet for poetry which sought to be radically conscious of contemporary society. The *Canadian Poetry Magazine* continued to publish a mixture of verse which was largely derived from the tradition of sentimentality and romance still fostered by the Canadian Authors Association and although several of the younger more progressive writers contributed to it because they lacked another more representative publication,[1] the main outlet for modern poetry during the last years of the Thirties was the *Canadian Forum*. Writing later in *Preview*, P. K. Page observed that: "there seemed at the time little hope of anything remotely contemporary appearing in print anywhere outside the pages of *Forum*."[2] Unlike *New Frontier*, however, the *Canadian Forum* could not serve the function of a radical literary magazine. Its editorial and political concerns were too broad to allow the devotion of a great deal of space to *avant garde* social poetry. Such poetry continued to be written during the years preceding the outbreak of the second world war, however, despite the fact that the continuing economic depression and the fascist victory in Spain had dispelled most hopes for the utopian future envisioned by many of the social writers of the

Thirties. The lack of a magazine which would publish such poetry in Canada was obvious and it was to fill this need that Dorothy Livesay, who had been one of the best and most politically active writers of the early Thirties as well as an outspoken editor of New Frontier, suggested to Doris Ferne, Floris McLaren, and Anne Marriott that they start a magazine of contemporary poetry on their own.[3] She asked Alan Crawley to be the editor and following his agreement the first issue of Contemporary Verse was published in September of 1941.

i Contemporary Verse

Floris McLaren described the literary climate into which Contemporary Verse was born as follows:

> . . . the climate of the time was particularly depressing. As Harriet Monroe of Poetry (Chicago) had written of the American scene thirty years earlier, "no editor is looking for long poems, he wants something light and convenient. The average magazine editor's conception of verse is something that will fill out a page." The chance of publication in Canada for an unknown writer, or for a writer experimenting with verse forms, or concerned with social and political themes, was almost non-existent.[4]

It is significant that McLaren places her emphasis upon "new verse forms" and "social and political themes" as characteristic of the kind of poetry she hoped would appear in the new magazine. It is also significant that the original idea for the magazine was Dorothy Livesay's even though Alan Crawley was from the beginning responsible for the selection of its contents. Livesay's association with Contemporary

Verse and McLaren's emphasis upon social and political themes as well as new verse forms is evidence of the fundamental link between the proletarian poetic of the Thirties best exemplified by New Frontier and the attitude toward the social function of poetry and the role of the poet as a literary-political activist which was basic to the magazine when it began.

Crawley, as editor, however, did not consider this to be the underlying poetic of the magazine. His wish was simply to provide a place where "writers of our own times who can speak to us in words and images and forms that interest and appeal"[5] could publish their poetry. "I am most anxious" he wrote in a letter to Floris McLaren, "that this should not be a boost to friends of the founders and certainly not a magazine of work by a small group."[6] Alan Crawley's idea then, was that the magazine should be as wide ranging and eclectic in its selection of poetry as possible, the only editorial criterion being that the writing be modern in subject and form and of high aesthetic quality. McLaren makes this point clear in her discussion of Crawley's editorial standards:

> It was never any part of Alan Crawley's policy to establish what John Lehmann has called a machinery of literary opinion makers. Poets working their way to their own solutions- political and economic, religious, or personal- stood side by side in the magazine; the editor's concern was with the honesty and quality of the work.[7]

Even Dorothy Livesay has remarked that Crawley "wasn't particularly interested in social poetry."[8] But despite the many references to Crawley's catholicity of taste and his

wish to maintain an objective attitude toward the subject matter of the poems he selected for publication, a look at the first issue reveals a considerable bias toward poems with political and social themes. This suggests that although Crawley's attitude toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet was based upon aesthetic principles which were far more liberal than those of any editor during the Thirties, the work that Canadian poets were producing by the early Forties was, with some modifications, quite naturally rooted in the social-political tradition which had been established by the left wing writers during the social turmoil of the previous decade. Crawley's insistence upon the primacy of an aesthetic criterion of artistic judgement, however, indicates that by 1941 the attitude that poetry should have a utilitarian function as well as an aesthetic one was becoming less important than it had been. It is an interesting irony, however, that of the eight poets who contributed to the first issue of Contemporary Verse which sought to be apolitical and eclectic, both Leo Kennedy and Dorothy Livesay were founding editors of the radically doctrinaire New Frontier. The poems that they contributed to this issue are evidence of the change which had taken place in their attitude toward poetry and their role as poets.

Shortly after New Frontier ceased publication in 1937 Dorothy Livesay gave up poetry in favor of social work and ceased to write. This in itself suggests that the revolutionary, proletarian poetic which she had advocated for so

long had failed to produce either the poetry or the political and social reforms she had hoped for. Under Crawley's influence she began to write again[9] and her poem "The Child Looks Out" appeared in Contemporary Verse 1. The poem illustrates a change in approach to the social theme she announced in the Thirties. Here, her method is to contrast the innocent vision of the urban child with the indifferent, oppressive society into which he has been born. It is not the genteel and ordered society of his parents which is characterized in the poem by tennis games, kilted soldiers marching, and "mothers in cool gowns who move about like moons / Upon eternal lawns, low laughter shimmering / About their curving mouths." The future that the child of the Forties "leans on" is "A tree ungainly rooted . . . by worlds / Who knew a private ecstasy unshared by him." But private ecstasy has now become a memory which the world has "let slip" from its grasp leaving the child only:

> . . . bristling phrases, last year's bills, and
> week-ends snatched
> In secret hate; his room laid waste when radios
> Are tuned, and rumour's blatant voice hits
> nerve,
> Dries tissue, brittles down
> The new unmoulded bone.

Page's reference to her as "an older, less biting, less adequate Livesay, most strangely in these times replacing her idealism with a lonely introspection,"[10] can be understood better in terms of other poems she published in Contemporary Verse, but here it is evident that her former idealistic hopes for a utopian future have disappeared.

Although her subject is still the contemporary society in which she lives, she now observes it with realistic pessimism as a world of "space / Unplanted, seed unwanted, wars unwarrented [sic] . . . Consuming / the child's / growing place." Livesay continues to see her role to be that of social critic but the political statement which was sometimes explicit in her poetry of the Thirties is entirely subordinate in this poem to an emphasis upon an expression of sympathy for the child destined to live in a society which has failed to live up to its promise of freedom and peace. The sympathetic compassion for an innocent victim is reminiscent of her earlier poetic technique but the difference in the Forties is that the villain has become the dehumanizing nature of modern society in general rather than the forces of fascism and capitalism per se.

The poem that Leo Kennedy contributed to the first issue of the magazine was "Carol For Two Swans." It is a striking departure from the kind of poetry he published in New Frontier and it indicates the futility Kennedy experienced in trying to meet the critical standards he developed during the Thirties. The poem, comprised of eight rhyming quatrains, deals rather lightly with the poet Ronsard's efforts to possess the love and beauty of Helen. Seeking her symbolic beauty and truth, he offers her "Sonnets enough to fill a book" but fails miserably in his attempt to capture her. The final stanza could be construed as a statement of the failure of the poet to achieve his goal by means of his art:

Nothing prevailed upon the chit!
And who shall say which was the loser,
The poet, with his verses writ,
The virgin, famed as a refuser?

If the poem is in any way a comment upon Kennedy's own attempts to make his art meet his critical standards then it is clear that he as a poet was "the loser" since it was during the early Forties that he ceased writing poetry entirely.

Although not wholly representative of the poetic attitude of Livesay and Kennedy by 1941, the two poems provide a rather profound contrast to those that they published in New Frontier. They imply that although Livesay was still interested in the poem as a means of documenting her attitudes toward society and Kennedy maintained his interest in the question of the ability of poetry to successfully capture and represent what was beautiful and important in life, their views of the function of poetry and the role of the poet had altered considerably by this time. Shortly afterwards Kennedy seems to have lost faith completely in it as a form of personal artistic expression while Livesay begins during the Forties to understand poetry more in terms of a personal, psychological expression of an emotional response to her environment.

The theme of man's relationship to his social milieu which is central to Livesay's "The Child Looks Out" is, with the exception of Kennedy's poem, characteristic of all the selections which appeared in the first issue of Contemporary Verse. This suggests that the proletarian poetic of the

Thirties was still the strongest influence felt by Canadian poets at the time. It was in fact the enthusiastic interest in the condition of individual man expressed during the Thirties which did most to engender the move toward the social-realist humanism of the Forties.

It is worthwhile considering the other poems Crawley chose for his first issue. The consistency with which they express the social and political theme indicates that his wish to publish a diversified selection of current Canadian poetry was frustrated by the attitude toward the function of poetry which many Canadian poets of the period commonly shared. Naturally enough, five of the remaining seven poems are directly concerned with using the war as a means of commenting upon the current social condition and the human feelings of confusion, impotence, and isolation which characterize it. Earle Birney's "Hands," the lead poem in the magazine, is a good example. The poem functions through a series of contrasts in which the peace and passivity of the natural environment are juxtaposed with the war and aggression of the world of men. The speaker realizes that he is a part of both worlds and that he has a kinship with the "slim trees . . . Arching the palms of their still green hands / Juggling the shimmer of ripples." It is the difference between the human animal and the natural trees, however, which preoccupies him. Only man can corrupt the world and create a situation where societies are driven to conquest. Thus, the speaker as a man and a poet feels alien to the beauty and the natural

harmony which surrounds him as his canoe floats down the shoreline. In this place where the conflict of his universe is "steeped in silence," the man is led to wish that his "species would wither, away from the radio's / Barkings / The headline beating its chimpanzee breast, / The nimble / Young digits at levers and triggers." He shares the world of crazed animals and although the trees too are alive with branches that resemble hands, he realizes that unlike him they are incapable of chaos:

> Cold and unskilled is the cedar, his webbed claws
> Drooping over the water shall focus no bombsight
> Nor suture the bayoneted bowel, his jade tips
> alert but to seadew and air and the soundless
> touch
> Of the light winked by the wind from the
> breathing ocean,
> Inept to clutch a parachute cord, the uniformed
> Throat, the mud by the Thames ebbing in agony.

But the poet would die if he accepted a similar kind of peaceful existence in his world. Even though his reverie is pleasant, it is for him unnatural and he must paddle "Back to the safe dead / Wood of the docks, the whining poles of the city, / To hands the extension of tools, of the militant / typewriter." His hands and those of society in general are at this time "gloved with steel" and drawn toward "a magnet . . . set . . . in Europe." The poem concludes with a frank and pessimistic understanding of the role of men in contemporary society who "are not of these shores . . . not of these woods, / Our roots are in autumn, and store for no spring." Such pessimism is reminiscent of Livesay's in "The Child Looks Out" and it is a further indication that after

having undergone their initiation into the thankless and unrewarding social realities of the Thirties, the poets would not again be easily led toward facile optimism and faith in the potential justice of the universe.

P. K. Page's poem, "Ecce Homo," deals with the poet's awakening to these harsher realities of life. It begins and ends with the line: "London had time to idle in galleries then," which suggests that the poem is being written not only as a reverie of a time when London and the world were at peace but also as the expression of the point of view of one who understands well that the present offers no time for idleness of any kind. The initiated speaker thus recalls a visit to a gallery in Leicester Square where Epstein's sculptures were being shown and where she was for the first time introduced to radical, unorthodox social ideas. It is not the experience of the sculptures, however, that first lead her to new awareness. Rather it is the influence of the unnamed companion in the poem who guides her through the gallery which is most significant. The guide is someone who tells her that "Polygamy should be legalized . . . monogamy / is dead," and describes himself as one of a race of "queer people." The speaker is unused to such candid opinions so far from the accepted norm. Her world has been one where: "People had never spoken like that before. / It had always been, / Lovely weather we're having / Or, at the most, / "I wish I hadn't read / that awful book by Cronin, it's obscene." When they enter the room containing the statue of "Ecce Homo"

her companion provides the "swift awakening" she has needed. The sculpted figure means nothing to her -"was bare to me," until the friend provides her with an insight into the image of God and man which the figure represents. He tells her that:

> To understand
> Christ must be forgotten.
> This is the mighty God. The God begotten
> -straight from the minds of prophets,
> straight from their fearful minds.
> This is the God of plagues,
> not the Christ who died
> for love of humanity . . . the beautiful gentle Boy,
> humorous, sunny eyed."

It is the vengeful, violent nature within God and man that she has never really considered before, and now, looking at the figure of "Ecce Homo" she perceives "the might of fear in stone, / immense and shackled . . . the Man, deformed, thick-hipped, / The God of Death." It is from the wisdom that this is the aspect of God which has become dominant in contemporary society that the poem itself was written. The social struggle in the Thirties and the world war in the Forties have revealed the truth of what "Ecce Homo" represents. Her understanding and acceptance of this aspect of human and divine nature is parallel to that expressed by Birney in "Hands." With such an awareness of the darker nature of man, and the war as positive proof of its implementation, neither poet can be confident that the future will be better. The other short poem that Page published in this issue reinforces this conclusion. "The Crow" is an impressionistic poem which evokes the atmosphere of vision or dream.

The image of the stormy ocean in which the waves are "riding the air, sweeping the high air low, / in a white foam, in a suds . . ." is contrasted to the image of the carrion crow standing beside the breaking waves "like a church-warden, like a stiff, / turn-the-eye-inward, old man / in a cut-away, in a mist." If this simple contrast, which comprises the entire poem, is to be taken as a symbolic representation of the contemporary universe, it is indeed a bleak and disillusioning picture.

The tone of disillusionment is continued in Anne Marriott's "Prayer Of The Disillusioned." In this poem, however, there is a more definite echo of her social voice of the Thirties. In 1939 she had published The Wind Our Enemy and this poem is very similar in approach to those in that volume. Here she hopes that a benevolent God will "Give us too a cause!" Through the imagery of barrenness and blowing sand she speaks as she did earlier for those who have been deprived of hope both by nature and society. In 1941 it is possible to associate the cry with mankind in general as well as the specific plight of the dustbowl farmer. Her prayer is thus for all who have lost their faith and need "a reason for living, one / reason, / or a reason for dying" which will allow them to "Make some shape from the shapeless sand." The people who live in this desert of hopelessness are "firm" in their knowledge "that . . . it [is] no mirage" and they are desperately looking for some sign that their resignation to a life without physical or spiritual reward is not their final

truth. Thus they wish to "come to the bound of the desert" where they can "Most blessedly lose" their present selves. As with the other poems, however, there is no real belief that this will occur. The prayer is a desperate one and offers a hope of what might be rather than an affirmation that the disillusioned will be redeemed.

A. J. M. Smith, who during the Thirties had confirmed the necessity of writing poetry which was aimed at social reform and had published in New Frontier, contributed "The Face" to the first issue of Contemporary Verse. Somewhat surprisingly it is one of the most explicit statements of the need for social action that appeared in the magazine. In the first part, "The man with the acid face" is described as someone who "Imperils the pure place." The face is the visage of selfishness and deceit which characterizes modern capitalist society and through the imagery of a card game Smith leads toward two final questions which cynically describe contemporary man: "Whose hand will you bite / With safest delight? / Whose safe will you crack / With a pat on the back?" The second part of the poem is a direct statement of the necessity for clear choices and willing action if this social attitude is to be changed. It is very reminiscent of the political propaganda of the Thirties:

> Replace the slave state face
> With a face of bread:
> Each shall choose his place,
> Be Dead or Red.
> The cards are in no way stacked,
> And he may live by grace
> Who wills to act.

This explicit directive emphasizes the poem's fundamentally pessimistic view of society and it provides a rather weak denouement to the cynicism of part one.

Floris Clark McLaren and Doris Ferne, who were members of the business committee of the magazine, each published a poem in the first number. McLaren's "No Lock, No Light" attempts to deal with the shock that sudden involvement in the violence of war has upon one's social consciousness. The poem accomplishes this by describing the preparation for an air-raid. The procedure is carried out with ritualistic precision. Each time, the door is closed "against the dark," the windows are barred, the "heavy" blinds are drawn "Across the heart," and the footstool is properly placed. These actions provide a feeling of security as the people wait for "the three light taps on the door" which signal that all is safe. On this occasion the three taps are not heard because the house is badly damaged and "the door is gone." The poem shifts at this point to the different kind of waiting that the bomb-shattered inhabitants must endure. From their point of view we see: "The gaping hole in the wall and the shredded blind, / The rubble heap and the splintered glass in the / street." Meanwhile they wait for "the hand not soft for love but hard to the / weapon / Quick to the tool: the strong hand / Lifting the twisted beam: the kind deft hand / Tying the bandage: and the comforting voice."

The quick decisive way in which lives are changed or destroyed in the war leaves the individual without any kind

of protection whatsoever. The prevailing mood of the actual situation and of the poem which describes it, is that of helplessness and vulnerability in the presence of overwhelming forces of arbitrary violence. Thus the poem is a microcosmic example of the general feeling of insecurity which characterizes the social consciousness of the early Forties.

Doris Ferne's "But One Tall Gable" is a similar poem both in theme and imagery. The speaker has heard that "the house where I was born is gone," and that the bombs have destroyed all but "one tall gable / standing / up to the sky." She then is reminded of her fear of the dark when she lived there as a small girl and realizes that a wartime child "alone would pray for dark / For moonlight means the planes are overhead." The world has changed completely into a place of bitter reality rather than childhood illusion. It is a place where "No fancies throng the shadows, for the stark / Reality of war has wiped the dread / Of all but bombs away."

The poems of the first number of Contemporary Verse show that it is marked by a consistent emphasis upon the theme of man's relationship to his society rather than to his art, his religion or his philosophy. Since Crawley solicited the poems from writers who were living in various parts of Canada and (in the case of Kennedy and Smith) the United States and made his choice of the number of poets who would be included by cutting a deck of cards, it would appear that he was left with a very rough random sample of the type of poetry being written at the time. Although he hoped for diversity

and variety, the fact is that the magazine began with a selection of work on a common theme written by poets who shared a similar desire to deal realistically with their contemporary social environment. They see the present as a dangerous time in which the negative aspects of human potential have become dominant to such a degree that it is possible to feel little optimism about their chances for redemption.

Although this pessimistic acceptance of the human condition is not so completely persistent in the other issues of the magazine which appeared during the first year, the social genre remains most prevalent and establishes the tone of the early Contemporary Verse. There are, however, some notable exceptions. In the second number, which appeared in December of 1941, Ralph Gustafson's poems are of a more private nature. "Prelude" is a fantasy upon his appreciation for the beauty and vitality of a young man who is about to dive from the "wharf-edge" into the water. He sees him with "pointed ears" as a Pan figure and he asks: "Heeding, big-eyed, / Pert woodwind / What are you about, White faun, finger / Up, phallos / Nestled in thighs' / Black curls?" As the youth dives toward the water the speaker sees him as a "Bronzed boy slanting sun" and the idealized portrait is complete. The sensuous imagery and the subjective nature of the poet's emotional experience make the poem unique among the early writing of Contemporary Verse. Gustafson's other poem, "And there shall be no gloom for her that was in anguish,"

is written in the same short-line form but is in rhyme rather than free verse. It is an oblique devotional poem in which the speaker's words are directed towards his own "heart of love" as well as his soul in an affirmation that faith will overcome anguish. It is from faith, personified as female, that he can learn "How dark is done / How softly do her eyes hold light." The intellectual basis of this poem, complete with sixteenth century syntax and language and rather complex conceits, readily suggests that it is modelled on the techniques of Donne. This is in sharp contrast to the Preraphaelite eroticism of "Prelude" which is most reminiscent of Swinburne. The two poems provide both an interesting glimpse of Gustafson's experimentation with poetic styles as well as an example of Crawley's willingness to publish poetry which was at the time undoubtedly avante garde. These poems are just two indications that Contemporary Verse was not wholly limited to the publication of social poetry. Two other examples from the same second issue, which included fourteen poems in all, show different characteristics.

"Poison Pen Points" by Leo Kennedy is another of his whimsical satiric verses on the subject of literary figures of the past. It takes the form of eight small portraits of Villon, Marlowe, Nashe, Wilmot, Christopher Smart, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, and Oscar Wilde respectively. Each is a kind of limerick and the one describing Baudelaire titled "sepilture d'un poete maudit" is a representative example:

Baudelaire, idol of the French,
Lived with a poxy colored wench,

Thus died of hashish and remorse.
Paretic? Naturally. Of course.

Carol Cassidy's "Preference: A Sequence Of Unrelated Thoughts" is a poem about poetry:

I like a poem
that picks the bones of a thought
clean,
leaving it stark white
for the eye to ponder . . .

a compliment that's unexpectedly tossed
like a pebble in a pool,
the concentric circles
lapping the edges of thought
with ripples widening . . .

snow
new laid and smoothed
with the trowel of the wind.

It is evident then, that although socially oriented poems dominate the early issues of Contemporary Verse, poets were taking various approaches to their art and Crawley was publishing them without hesitation. The preponderance of social poetry, however, suggests that Crawley was receiving more submissions of this type than any other. The third number of the magazine contains poems by two of the more frequent contributors to New Frontier: A. M. Stephen and Gordon LeClaire. Stephen's poem, "I Am A Voice Alone," is one of the few examples of traditional, sentimental nationalism that Crawley accepted. It is more the type of verse which was often published by the Canadian Poetry Magazine than the modern idiom characteristic of Contemporary Verse. The excited emotional tone of the final stanza, for example, appears completely incongruous with the magazine's editorial policy:

For I have felt a stirring in your earth,
your soil that is in each cell of me,
flesh of my flesh.
I have heard
the dawn wind in your maples
and . . .
I know!

The two poems by Gordon LeClaire, on the other hand, are very close in subject and tone to his agitational poetry of New Frontier. "Woodcut In Colour," for example, recalls an incident during the Spanish Civil War. The poem begins and ends with the image of "three vultures poised on an olive bough" waiting for their meal after the killing has finished. The republican martyrs here are a pauper, a peasant, and a princeling who valiantly "Held a ridge on the road to Madrid" while "The air, thick with gunflame, bristled / With the whine of flying lead." As a parallel to this, "Charivari" appeared on the facing page. Written in much the same style, the poem deals with the terrors of the present where: "Fuhrers build red pyramids of skulls / and rising suns diffuse their yellow glare . . ." The ruthless cruelty of the Axis forces is described by analogy to a nightmarish medieval charivari in which the revellers tie the young wife to a "fencerail splintered by lightning" and then tar and feather her husband. To celebrate their barbarism the mad revellers dance "a quadrille of death / to the jagged rhythm of kettles and horns, / cracked fiddles and bladder drums."

In contrast to these poems is Raymond Souster's "Home Front" which was his first publication in Contemporary Verse. It illustrates the more modern poetic approach to war poetry

as well as Souster's early writing style. Here the emphasis is upon the personal experience of guilt and remorse which arises from the death of a fellow airman stationed in Europe while the speaker in the poem is enjoying the comforts of a posting far from the action of battle in Canada. The poet recalls with bitter irony that while he was attending the movies and the experience afterwards of "the dry / wetness / of her lips, the long cool wetness," his friend who had been shot down in combat was "lying crisp as a cinder . . . chest ripped, waiting for the bugs." The subjective, confessional nature of the poem as well as its employment of ordinary rather than exotic imagery further suggests that poetry was gradually moving away from the ideal implications attached to the attempts at realistic expression during the Thirties. As a very young writer (eighteen) Souster represents a new understanding of the function of poetry based upon simple language and a frank and honest approach to the realities of life. The fact that both types of poetry appear within the same issue of the magazine is an indication of the significant transitional time in the development of modern Canadian poetry at which Contemporary Verse appeared. Indeed, one of the most valuable aspects of the magazine is its continual reflection of the changes which occurred in Canadian poetry during the decade of the Forties.

Besides poetry which was modern in subject matter, Crawley was interested in publishing work which was experimental in form. Various examples of unusual or experimental

techniques could be cited and compared to the more traditional ones which appeared with them in the same issue during the first year of publication but it will suffice here to refer briefly to the pair of poems which Crawley chose as his conclusion to the fourth number. Earle Birney's "War Winter" is a social commentary in experimental form. It is one of his earliest exercises in the application of the techniques of Anglo-Saxon versification to modern subject matter. As in "Hands" which was the first poem in Contemporary Verse, Birney makes his statement by associating the order of the natural universe with the troubled world of men. The speaker sees the winter sun as a sign of relief and appeasement in trouble-stricken, cold season. Even though the sun is not shining brightly overhead and appears only as a "tarnished chimneyplug," and a "sucked wafer," and a "white simpleton," there is at least a small degree of contentment in knowing that it is still there. The symbolic equation between the natural winter season and the winter season of human society is obvious and the tone of the first stanza, which is in the form of a question, suggests the disbelief with which people accept any evidence that their world is not entirely destined to "drown in snow." But under the current circumstances of war and growing industrial technology which have produced a grotesque system of human values, any light is welcome and desperately needed. Thus the speaker in the poem projects his analogy one step further and observes that the nature of sunlight cannot be completely explained by physical reference

to the month of the year or the earth's latitude. It gains added significance from the philosophical and symbolic way in which men choose to see it:

> Not chiefly the month moulds you, heartcharmer,
> to scant hammerdent on hardiron sky,
> not alone the latitude to lodgers on this
> your slantwhirling lackey, life crusted satellite,
> this your one wrynecked, woedealing world.

The poem maintains the same pessimistic acceptance of the contemporary social situation that Birney expressed in "Hands." His use of the Anglo-Saxon caesura, the kennings and alliterative patterns, although giving the impression of being imposed on the subject matter rather than being natural to it, do indicate his wish to experiment with verse forms and to introduce unusual, if not original, literary techniques. Being both experimental in form and social in theme, "War Winter" can be seen as an embodiment of the fundamental critical principles on which Contemporary Verse was based.

The last poem in the fourth issue is Doris Ferne's "On Some Canadian Verse." Whereas Birney's poem provides an ideal example of the kind of work Contemporary Verse wished to publish, this poem provides an insight into the kind of poetry which was most unacceptable to the modernists of the early Forties. Ferne's attitude is similar to that expressed by the progressive literary critics of New Frontier who were strongly opposed to a subjective, introspective approach to poetry because it often implied a retreat from important social issues. "On Some Canadian Verse" restates this argument by taking the position that: "Never while sitting remote /

regarding her own navel / shall she [the poet] be free / to utter the wounds of the world." It is the "wounds of the world" which modern poetry must comment upon if it is to be worthwhile. Thus, despite the renewed interest in poetic techniques and experimental forms, an important function of poetry in the early Forties continues to be that of speaking out against social and political evils both by publicizing them and by commenting upon the condition of people who have become victimized. The poet who takes a selfish, introspective role misses the more important concerns of the world and becomes a narcissus figure who is not free "to utter the torture scream of Singapore / nor the choked cry of boys in Hong Kong / bound round the head with ropes / and flogged till merciful bullets / whined an end." The main social issue of poetic concern is, of course, the terror and brutality of war but Ferne concludes with some suggestions regarding technique. The poet who sits "in a mesmerized trance / regarding her navel" does not know "her function is not photographic." This is significant because it suggests that realism as an end in itself is not a satisfactory justification for poetry. Realistic social expression must aid in the purpose of "piercing . . . synthetic shibboleths" and "pointing the ultimate goal."

From this poem and from the fact that Crawley chose it as the concluding statement to volume one of Contemporary Verse, it is evident that the social-didactic function of poetry established in the Thirties is still an important

attitude. The war in particular gave rise to a continued belief in the need for poetry which was directed toward a public rather than a private kind of speech. Some exceptions have been noted but Crawley's retrospective editorial statement regarding the eclectic policy of the magazine which introduced the fourth issue deserves further comment. In it he says:

> . . . the contents of each number will at once dispell any charge that it exists to press political propaganda, particular social readjustment or literary trend. The aims of Contemporary Verse are simple and direct and seem worthy and worthwhile. These aims are to entice and stimulate the writing and reading of poetry and to provide means for its publication free from restraint of politics, prejudices and placations, and to keep open its pages to poetry that is sincere in thought and expression and contemporary in theme and treatment and technique.[11]

Three observations can be made regarding this statement in light of the discussion of the original four issues of the magazine. The first is that, without being aware of it perhaps, Alan Crawley had published a body of poetry which was largely of a social genre. Although Contemporary Verse did not exist "to press political propaganda, particular social readjustment or literary trend," most of its poems dealt with the problems of contemporary society in such a way that an over-all attitude of pessimism and disillusionment prevails. Even though no particular solutions are offered, there is indeed an implicit expression of the need for social, political and moral reform. As well, the prevalence of this type of poem suggests that the magazine was presenting evidence of a definite literary "trend." The other types of poetry that were published indicate that the magazine was at

the same time revealing the poetic changes which were in process.

A second observation suggested by the editorial has to do with Crawley's desire to use the magazine "to entice and stimulate the writing and reading of poetry." Floris McLaren quotes a letter that P. K. Page wrote to Crawley in this regard during the last years of the magazine's existence:

> Little magazines are essential in Canada if the movement- dare one call it that? which has begun is to continue. But little mags are not the entire answer. Your policy has always been one in which you were as much concerned with the development of your contributors as you were with the standards of your magazine. Other magazines may be just as concerned but they do less about it.
>
> Your criticism, encouragement, and even chastisement have been enormously helpful to me- as they have I know to other writers . . . By publishing the work of young writers CV has helped to fill a tremendously important gap. But more than that it has been the part played by you in being so much more than an editor.[12]

Crawley understood the role of the poet to be one of providing, through modern language and technique, an artful expression of his society. He also had the "high hope" that the poets would help his magazine to "play a worthy part in the building of Canadian literature."[13] The encouragement of poets to continually improve and develop, which he always saw as a major aspect of his job, suggests that one of the important long-range functions of poetry for Crawley was to improve and strengthen the quality of Canadian culture. During the Forties an important interest in the cultural ethos of Canada was growing. It will later be shown that this attitude plays a significant part in the critical stance of magazines such as First Statement and Northern Review just as it was given

national expression in the establishment of the Royal Commission for the Arts, Letters, Humanities and Social Sciences in 1949.

The third point regarding the editorial stems from his tone of pleasure and satisfaction at the success achieved by Contemporary Verse during its first year. Crawley had suspected that a great deal of poetry was being written and that a considerable amount would be worth publishing if the magazine was provided. His suspicions were confirmed and after the first issue it was evident that there would be no difficulty in receiving enough submissions to justify the magazine's existence. The success of the magazine then, is symptomatic of the renewed enthusiasm for poetry and the increased degree of poetic activity which had begun in Canada by the early Forties.

Just as the first issues of Contemporary Verse reflected both the influence of the Thirties and the newer attitudes toward poetry which were beginning to develop, the later issues provide a continuing indication of the other changes which took place in Canadian poetry during the eleven years that the magazine was published. Contemporary Verse will be referred to in this regard throughout the present chapter as its views become relevant in relation to the other magazines which had begun to appear by the time its fourth issue was published. The generalized literary enthusiasm which the success of Contemporary Verse revealed, had also taken on more specific dimensions, the first evidence of which

was the origination of Preview and First Statement magazines in Montreal. Preview appeared in March of 1942, the same month that the third number of Contemporary Verse was published.

ii Preview

Whereas Alan Crawley's editorial statements were intended to be broad enough to encompass a wide range of modern poetry, the editorial policy of Preview was, from the outset, intended to confine the type of poetry it would publish within certain limits. The tone established by the first issue of the magazine echoes clearly the social-revolutionary poetic of the Thirties:

> All anti-fascists, we feel that the existence of a war between democratic culture and the paralyzing forces of dictatorship only intensifies the writer's obligation to work. Now, more than ever, creative and experimental writing must be kept alive and there must be no retreat from the intellectual frontier- certainly no shoddy betrayal, on the lines of Archibald MacLeish, Van Wyck Brooks and others, of those international forces which combine in a Picasso, a Malraux or a Joyce. Secondly, the poets amongst us look forward, perhaps optimistically, to a possible fusion between the lyric and didactic elements in modern verse, a combination of vivid, arresting imagery and the capacity to "sing" with social content and criticism.
>
> Thirdly, we hope to make contact, as a group, with new writing movements in England, the United States and other parts of Canada.[14]

The Preview group's interest in aligning themselves with the cause of democracy in the war against fascism and their wish to write poetry which would express their concerns through a fusion of lyric and didactic elements, as well as their interest in making contact with international writing

movements, suggests that the group's attitude toward the role of the poet and the function of poetry was essentially similar to that of the left wing poets and critics of New Frontier. They were trying to justify the value of the existence of the poet and his poetry during a time of international social and political crisis. The critical and editorial position of the magazine placed a constant emphasis upon the role of the poet in wartime. Preview 11 (February 1943), for example, was an issue dedicated to the Red Army "whose recent heroic successes have done so much for the cause of human freedom and culture everywhere." It was devoted to the group's impressions of "some aspects of the war" and it contains Patrick Anderson's now rather infamous statements concerning the relationship between war and the writer: "Two events of great importance to the writer have occurred in recent weeks. One is the Russian offensive, the other the conference at Casablanca. Both are hopeful signs for winning the war." Anderson goes to extreme lengths to justify the role of the writer during wartime and he burns with an embarrassing enthusiasm for the support of other writers, assuring them that: "In a people's war the writer can feel at home." In Preview 15 (August 1943) Anderson announced his intent to publish the Victory Broadsheet which would deal exclusively with war poetry that could "appeal to a wider public" and contain "a simpler, more popular kind of poetry" than the parent magazine. These broadsheets were to be distributed in factories and schools in an effort to bring the meaning

of the war home to people through poetry. Several were, in fact, printed and distributed, illustrating the sincerity of Anderson's enthusiasm and conviction that poetry could be made to serve a positive social purpose. The implication in Anderson's desire to provide a means, other than Preview itself, of bringing poetry to the public, is that the parent magazine could not do the job. It was in fact often too subjective, psychological, and obscure to appeal to a wide audience. Ringrose's observations in this regard are pertinent:

> Either the idea of a poetry full of common humanity must not be identified with a working-class audience, or we must judge the Preview verse as an attempt to communicate to such an audience, in which case its style was ludicrously inappropriate and its means of distribution absurd. The fact that Anderson began En Masse as a magazine aimed more at the worker's audience suggests that he himself found that the attempt to write poetry full of the "feel of people" was not necessarily synonymous with expressing the dreams of the proletariat in such a way that all sections of society would be moved by them.[15]

It is evident then, that like Contemporary Verse, Preview was publishing poetry which was in certain important aspects at odds with its editorial policy. This conflict of interest will be discussed later. For the moment it is important to emphasize the editorial preoccupation with the war. It is significant that the last contribution to the final number of Preview (April 1945) was a short journalistic piece by Anderson titled "Portrait of A Marine." In it he describes a marine who has come home on leave and is attending a party. The man speaks in clichés and platitudes about the war and refuses to come to terms with the real questions

such as "the meaning of the war and fear." Before leaving, the marine wonders why his mother has never opened any of the letters he sent her from the front and the speaker replies in a parting coup de grace, "Perhaps they would make her too sad." The speaker considers this a victory because he has led the man to face the real meaning of the war in which he is involved. Thus he concludes: "the marine is mine now, as I have put him down here, with sympathy and revenge." Anderson's attitude here is important because it illustrates that one of the main tendencies the Preview writers opposed was the public's efforts to avoid the issues for which the war was being fought. It also suggests that the role of the poet, like the speaker in the story, is to bring these issues to the reader's attention so that he will be more aware of himself as an individual and as a social being.

The attempt to explain the place of the writer in wartime is thus one of the main concerns of the magazine. It was, in fact, devoted to the premise that a major function of poetry was to heighten the general public's awareness of the evil and injustice of contemporary society. Although Preview published no detailed social criticism or political analyses, its recurring editorial emphasis upon the need to win the war and the writer's part in bringing about the victory, is ample proof of the social and political incentives on which the magazine was founded. It was this social-political incentive, largely attributable to the enthusiasm of Patrick Anderson, which provided the impetus behind the group's vigorous

interest in writing and publishing modern social poetry. The members of the Preview group were, in varying degrees, oriented toward left wing politics. Anderson was a communist, Bruce Ruddick and Neufville Shaw Marxists, F. R. Scott and A. M. Klein were associated with the C.C.F. and P. K. Page was "left of centre."[16] The ideological link with the political ethos of the Thirties is evident and the presence of Scott and Klein as members of the original Preview group provided a physical embodiment of this ideological continuity.

Even though the magazine was based upon an awareness of the close association between poetry and politics, Preview, unlike New Frontier or Canadian Forum (which was Fabian socialist during the war), was primarily a literary magazine with social and radical concerns rather than a left wing magazine which published poetry.[17] The magazine's main concern was with the task of embodying its own critical and editorial aims by publishing poetry, written for the most part by the members of the group, which attempted to fuse the "lyric and didactic elements in modern verse." Their goal as poets was to write aesthetically interesting poetry rather than politically interesting propaganda.

In the February, 1942 issue of Canadian Forum, Earle Birney offered "Advice To Anthologists: Some Rude Reflections On Canadian Verse."[18] In the article he specifically attacked the regressive, tradition-bound poetry which had been published a year earlier in the anthology Voices Of Victory. The collection was the result of a poetry contest sponsored

by the C.A.A. and the stated objective of the book was "to let the poetic genius of Canada and the Canadian people sound a spiritual challenge to the brutality of enemy despots and tyrants."[19] The first poem in the collection was the winner of the contest and it provides a representative example of the type of writing to which Birney objected:

RECOMPENSE

Where lovely Avon winds her rippling train,
Jewelled with yellow lilies, through the lush
Forget-me-not fringed banks—where the refrain
Of silver-throated lark and misselthrush
Enchanted you—you will not walk again.

You will not see the fires of sunset burn,
And fade at evenfall, or hear again
The nightingale's ethereal nocturne;
And golden Junes will star the riverain
With fragrant flowers—but you will not return.

You will not see again the faery foam
Of blackthorn blossom breaking, when the Spring
Comes round again—and, in the falling gloam
Your feet no more will press the purple ling
That diadems the dear, green hills of home.

But, though your singing heart will never leap
With ecstacy again, in England's dower
Of deathless loveliness—this thought I keep—
You shared the glory of her greatest hour
Before your eyes were shuttered in long sleep.

Agnes Aston Hill

Birney's argument against this kind of Georgian inspired patriotic war poetry was the same as that advanced by A. M. Stephen in the September, 1936 issue of New Frontier.[20] With considerably more wit than Stephen, Birney argued that:

In such a big country, our poets have long cultivated a very small potato, with almost no export value. Some apologists have justly blamed the soil, labor conditions, bad markets. The trouble seems rather in the growers, who have preferred to propagate from old leathery seed potatoes, inclined to

gush forth a luxurious topgrowth, concealing sometimes no spuds at all. Lately the crop has been improving, with such stout hoers as Pratt, the quondam Montreal group, and the Westerners. Yet the product remains little known either inside or outside Canada. One reason for this is surely the badness of our anthologies.[21]

The patriotic war poems of Voices of Victory were the worst examples of the kind of poetry American and European readers had come to expect from Canadian writers. Such dependence upon unimaginative, outdated, traditional influences, however, also had a serious effect upon the poetry in Canada because it perpetuated outworn poetic techniques. Birney's citing of the "quondam Montreal group, and the Westerners" as examples of contemporary efforts to improve the situation is, of course, a specific reference to the Preview and First Statement writers and those associated with Contemporary Verse. Although Preview was concerned with poetry which reflected the human struggle of a world war, it was, with Birney, very much opposed to the kind of writing which Voices of Victory represented. F. R. Scott's "A Note On Canadian War Poetry" which appeared in Preview 9 (November 1942) takes up Birney's attack on the anthology in more detail and provides some valuable insights into the Preview poetic.

Scott's argument is as follows: "A live movement in poetry will reflect and often foreshadow the creative movements in its social environment. Poets sensitive to the growing forces of their age will give symbolic expression to those forces and will become a potent instrument of social change."[22] This can be understood as the underlying philosophy of the social poetic of Preview. But anthologies such as

Voices of Victory which purport to be "representative of Canada in wartime" suggest all too plainly that they represent a "dead tradition" which "reflects nothing but the attitudes of the past, expressed in clichés of the past." Such poetry indicates Canada's tendency to react very slowly not only to new literary ideas but also to new social and political developments. Thus:

> [Canada] will fear and oppose the new in literature because the new spells death itself. In Canada, where so much tradition, deprived of content, has become mere habit, this influence produces the kind of poem with which we are all painfully too familiar- neat, accurate, unambiguous, earnest and ordinary. The surprising thing is how long such sterility can live and go on reproducing itself . . . Perhaps in Canada more than anywhere else the old traditions are still with us as dominant as before . . .[23]

It is this kind of traditional "in-breeding" which tends toward the reproduction of the same obsolete poetic expression of its social environment of which anthologies like Voices of Victory are symptomatic that periodicals such as Contemporary Verse, First Statement and especially Preview, are attempting to destroy. They represent a more socially sensitive poetry movement and are evidence of the "new forces stirring beneath the old crust, moving deeply in the hearts and minds of men, giving us a common cause with other races and nations."[24] Rather than continue to look inward at their own traditions which are fostered by a persistent colonialism the Preview poets sought (as their first editorial stated) to avoid parochialism and to "make contact" with other modern poetry movements in America, England, as well as other parts of Canada. Scott implies that the new poets are really

attempting to express a modern state of mind which is characterized by a struggle to react honestly and as originally as possible to their current social, political, and literary milieu. His list of the defects inherent in the colonial mentality can be seen as a description of the value system that none of the Preview group wanted to share:

> The colonial is an incomplete person. He must look to others for his guidance, and far away for his criterion of values. He copies the parental style instead of incorporating what is best in something of his own. He undervalues his own contribution and overestimates what others can do for him. Old greatness is more to him than new truth. Above all he fears originality, which might cut him off from his secure base. The outside world seems foreign and hostile to him, and he will cling to ancient traditions long after they have been abandoned in his metropolis . . .[25]

Thus, the function of poetry for the Preview group was, most generally, to oppose the vices of the colonial mentality by being unafraid of originality and by refusing to perpetuate obsolete literary traditions. As Scott phrased it: "the duty of the poet is to help in the enfranchisement, not to decorate the old chariot."[26]

A similar argument was advanced by Neufville Shaw in Preview 17 (December 1943). "The Maple Leaf Is Dying" was written as a response to his reading of A. J. M. Smith's The Book Of Canadian Poetry which had appeared earlier that year. Shaw observes that the majority of the poems in the anthology are distinguished by their dependence upon imitation of Romantic, Victorian, and Pre-Raphaelite inspiration and technique. This in turn has led to a persistent nationalism in which "the poet drearily painted golden sunsets or found Pan and Eurydice under every Maple Leaf" or surrendered him-

self to "empty landscape."[27] The more modern poetry in the book, however, indicates that the maple-leaf tradition is dying because:

> We can no longer judge their work by its approximation to a model . . . but rather by the success with which the poet has released his experience and the degree in which his form reveals his content. Their work is national in the best sense of the word- that is, an assertion of the value of their own attitude rather than one overshadowed by the awareness of the superiority of foreign cultural reaction.[28]

In F. R. Scott's terms, Shaw sees the tendency of the modern poets to turn their back upon the colonial mentality in favor of more independent means of self expression as a sign that Canadian poetry is gaining a private identity and maturity that had previously been lacking. Being a member of the Preview group, Shaw quite naturally cites Scott, Anderson, Page, as well as James Wreford, as the writers whose poetry most clearly indicates the death of the maple leaf. It is significant that he praises them not only because of their "complete disregard for dictated chauvinism" but, more importantly, because they are social poets whose didacticism "while not constituting political directive, is a ruthless analysis of social falsehood."[29] The tendency toward "a ruthless analysis of social falsehood" rather than a specific political directive is a major differentiation between the social poetry of the Forties and that of the Thirties. Shaw's attitude, in fact, is very close to that expressed by Alan Crawley in his editorials.

This attitude is reflected in the pessimism of much of the poetry which appeared in the early Forties. Whereas

the political directives of the Thirties often led to optimism and hope for a better world in the future, the poetry of the Forties usually held no such illusions. Shaw's essay "Old Elizabeth And New George" which appeared in Preview 13, is a general discussion of the literary attitude toward heroes from the Renaissance to the present and describes the radical poets of the Thirties as artists who boarded a train of revolution which never pulled out of the station. Their optimism was crushed when the proletarian revolution failed and the struggle for social democracy was swallowed up in the Second World War. Disillusionment thus became fashionable after the hopes of the Thirties were dashed and if Contemporary Verse and Preview are representative of the poetic expression of the social temper of the early Forties, then it is evident that disillusionment was still the prevailing mood.

In Contemporary Verse 8 (June 1943), Dorothy Livesay reviewed four Ryerson Chapbooks which included Anne Marriott's The Salt Marsh. She likewise expressed her displeasure with the verse that was being published for reasons similar to those of Birney and Scott although the books she was reviewing were not devoted to war poetry. Her assertion that "Ten years ago we spat at sentimental lyricism, bedecked with nature's more obvious garments; and we cried out for ideas, and a genuine interpretation of people in poetry"[30] is essentially the same as that of Birney and Scott because she understands the books, and especially The Salt Marsh, to be "adolescent" verse which perpetuates old traditions and mis-

represents both the current poetic vitality and the contemporary social environment. Livesay's conclusion criticizes these reactionary trends in modern poetry while suggesting that more attention be paid to the work being done in Montreal and less to the parochial concerns of British Columbia: "In sum: ten years and no birth? And poetry at a standstill? Perhaps it is in B.C. And perhaps it is time for us to look for younger, more masculine work- even though it spring up east of the Rockies."[31] Livesay here is not only echoing the conclusions reached independently by other critics of the period but is also reiterating her disillusionment with the fact that a great deal of evidence still exists to show that although the literary enthusiasm of the Thirties was largely responsible for the renewed interest in modern social poetry during the Forties, the critical boldness had not been entirely successful in bringing Canadian poetry into vital contact with society. Thus, the Preview poets and critics, though relatively satisfied in their own minds as to their aesthetic purpose and direction, were still fighting the traditional literary conservatism which had, since the Twenties, continued to stand in the way of poetry's ability to function as a means of heightening the average man's awareness of himself in a troubled society.

Despite their concern with originality and the severing of traditional colonial ties which held Canadian poetry in the backwater of the modern movement, the Preview poets, like the poets of the Thirties, were not without their models.

In his discussion of the factors which influenced the Preview group, Ringrose makes the following observation:

> . . . while the group . . . found support and inspiration in the thirties poets from Canada, they were extremely catholic in their tastes and open to influences from many quarters. The more important poetic influences on the group seem to have been English rather than American. They were greatly influenced by the English poets of the thirties, and had, like their contemporaries in England, an ambivalent mixture of admiration and disappointment in the work of Auden and Spender. Eliot's influence in terms of technique, is evident, and Anderson's admiration for Dylan Thomas and Rilke seems to have affected his own poetry, and through it the rest of the group.
>
> Of the influences, the most important to the group as a whole in terms of style, attitudes and themes was that of W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender.[32]

The Thirties'poets had also looked to Spender and Auden for examples of sincere poetry of social protest which transcended the limits of propaganda and invective. As Dorothy Livesay's previous remarks indicate, the search in the Thirties was not only for ideas, but also for "a genuine interpretation of people in poetry." The poets of the Thirties, however, failed on the whole in their effort to unite personal and political elements into a poetry which was effective both as art and propaganda. Although the basic aim of the Thirties' poets was to speak publicly on behalf of the victimized individual in society, their common tendency to champion the "cause" often meant that sincere compassion for the individual was lost in sentimentality or generalized in terms of the masses. The Preview writers, having a similar attitude toward the social function of poetry and the political role of the poet, also wanted to unite lyric and didactic elements into an aesthetically pleasing organic whole. But realizing the

failure of their predecessors, their principle concern was to insure that "common humanity" (to use Anderson's phrase) was central to their type of social verse. The poets of the Forties had come to understand "that neither a poetry which attacks its enemies without embodying its own ideals, nor eager and unambiguous propaganda for world socialism, were likely to be successful artistically."[33] Thus, with a somewhat more sophisticated view of the humanist function of poetry, they too turned to the English social poets and particularly to Auden and Spender's insistence on the necessity of sincere human compassion, for their inspiration.

Preview 8 is a valuable number of the magazine in explaining the writers' attitudes toward the relationship between poetry and the individual. In it, Anderson, Page, and Shaw all published pieces on the subject. Patrick Anderson's "A Reply," written in response to a letter criticizing his review of Spender's Ruins And Visions which had appeared in Preview 7, shows that although Anderson shares the group's enthusiasm for fusing the personal with the social in poetry, he was more impressed with the example Spender set during the Thirties than with his later more private, introspective poems. Anderson's understanding that a "gap existed between the artist and society" leads him to suggest means by which the gap might be closed. One method would be for the poet to "become a definitely socialist writer, as John Cornford was." But, provided the poetry "identified itself so strongly with the masses, was so full of common humanity,

that it succeeded in expressing the life and dreams of the people," a doctrinaire socialist aesthetic position was not essential. If the poetry served this broad function it made no difference whether the poet was "a semi-socialist, a liberal, a mystic or whatever." Anderson's main quarrel with Auden and Spender in this regard was that they often lacked scope. As he put it in the article: "various influences-public school, psycho-analytical, cliquishness, sentimental-limit their capacity to give a picture of more than one section of one class." Seeking an example of a more universal kind of social expression, Anderson cites Karl Shapiro as a writer with "the gift for illuminating simple objects and actions of everyday life, so that one's very delight at recognition fuses with one's general emotional attitude toward the world." So, although Anderson was attracted by the essentially social and personal basis of Auden and Spender's poetry, his attraction was not without reservations. The important point here, however, is not so much Anderson's personal attitude toward the English social poets, as his conviction that regardless of intellectual or political stance, the poet must produce work which avoids the tendency toward abstraction and attempts primarily to express "the feel of people."[34]

P. K. Page rephrases this attitude more directly in terms of Canadian poetry in her Preview 8 article, "Canadian Poetry 1942." Speaking of the valuable service that Contemporary Verse, Preview, and First Statement have done

for Canadian literature by providing outlets for modern experimental poetry, she offers the following critical observations regarding the role of the poet:

> He has yet to come to grips with himself and stop crying "Help" from the prairies and woods and mountains. If instead he will hitch-hike to the towns and identify himself with people, forget for a while the country of his own head, he may find his age and consequently his belief.[35]

Just as her belief in the necessity of breaking with the "maple leaf" tradition echoes the views of Neufville Shaw, F. R. Scott, and Earle Birney, her contention that poetry must be more humanistic and less cerebral, parallels the convictions expressed by Livesay and Anderson. Neufville Shaw stressed the same principle in Preview 8 with regard to Canadian painting.[36] The Canadian painter faces the same problem as the Canadian writer in attempting to produce what Shaw calls "humanist" art. He refers to the ironic example of the painters of the Thirties who donated their work to the cause of democracy in Spain noting that: "They were cold pictures of the Laurentians, still lives, street scenes without people, in fact, everything save the depiction of the cause motivating the donation-love of the individual."[37] Thus, Shaw along with the other members of the Preview group, is most concerned that Canadian art of the Forties, and poetry in particular, should be imbued with "the feel of people."

The Preview group's understanding of the role of the poet, however, was not only that he should deal honestly and compassionately with the personal anxieties of the individual in society but also that he should do this in such a way that

the average man not ordinarily inclined to read poetry might be able to understand and respond to the poems. It was particularly in this regard that the magazine failed to embody its own critical ideals. This fact suggests that although the Preview poetic was based upon social and political incentives which had their roots in the Thirties, these incentives did not override the cultural and literary emphasis that the magazine always had. The group's determination to maintain high literary standards by trying to avoid mere propaganda and agitational verse and their desire to make use of modern techniques and language resulted in a type of poetry which often alienated the average reader.

This failing is most evident from the fact that the editors published Preview 21 (September 1944) as an explanatory issue. It was in response to a request (from a Canadian army captain) for an explanation of some of their poems in previous issues which he found obscure. Each of the group included a poem with an explanatory preface and Anderson contributed an editorial in which he provided some general advice on reading poetry. Although most of his comments aimed at distinguishing good poetry from bad disappear into the argument that poetry must be intuited, his final summary is the best statement of the Preview attitude toward the role of the poet and the function of poetry to be found in the magazine. Anderson, speaking for the group, significantly places his emphasis upon the cultural rather than the political role of the poet:

> I believe that the poet has a real function to play in our society, particularly when social and economic progress is getting ahead of cultural and 'spiritual' development. I think that this is obvious when we reflect that forces which are progressive politically are sometimes little more than reactionary culturally. Whether we define the role of the poet as being to stress the importance of the economic and psychological individual or to build up a rich associational background for our increasingly collective age or simply as a means for interesting the middle-class in social change, or all these things and more, I feel that he has an important part to play. He can be humanist leader of the modern movement.[38]

It is clear that Anderson intends the term "humanist" to be applied to the poet in its broadest sense, that is, as it relates to human culture as well as human compassion. Poetry can help to provide the cultural and spiritual development which must occur if social and economic development is to have any real value. In a rapidly advancing technological society, it is the function of poetry and art in general to insure that the integrity and importance of the individual is not swallowed up in a "collective" social environment. Thus, the poet's role as a cultural retainer is paramount and his role as a social and political reformer is only a by-product of his humanist intentions.

By being against propaganda and in favor of poetry which maintains a high level of artistic sophistication, the Preview writers were faced with the problem of wanting to communicate with the average reader but not wanting to compromise their aesthetic principles in order to do so. They settled, generally, for poetry which derived its inspiration from a sensitive response to the anxiety experienced by individuals as a result of the constant social pressure exerted

upon them. Instead of dealing with this subject matter in a simple, direct kind of poetry, however, they most often chose a complex, metaphysical technique. In this way their poetry attempted to fulfill both its humanistic and its cultural ends. Whether or not the poems were easily understood by the average reader seems in the end to have been less important than their success at meeting the literary standards of the group.

Ringrose has dealt with the poetry that the group (Bruce Ruddick, Neufville Shaw, P. K. Page, Patrick Anderson, and F. R. Scott) published in the magazine pointing out that its least attractive aspects are a tendency to distort normal syntax to the extent that it becomes mannerism and a frequent desire on the part of the poets to flaunt their cleverness at the reader. He suggests that the most typical characteristics of the poetry are its complex syntax, arresting imagery and intensity of tone.[39] Anderson and Page are the most successful practitioners of this neo-metaphysical style "because they achieve a fusion of subject matter, tone, form and imagery capable of completing their poems."[40] Anderson is seen as a writer who is able, when he is at his best, to organize and integrate the present day reader's experience of society; while Page was encouraged by Preview's somewhat messianic stance as a "self-appointed guardian of culture and critic of society," to develop a tendency to moralize in her poetry.[41] This, however, did not prevent her writing from being, on the whole, the best published by the magazine. A

major theme common to the Preview poetry is the individual's tendency to isolate himself from reality of war, social relationships, and injustice.[42] Because the Preview group were primarily concerned with publishing examples of their own work in progress, the magazine shows both the positive and negative results of in-breeding and self-interest. One of the negative results in terms of their own critical aims is that they produced poetry geared toward their own aesthetic tastes rather than those of the average reader. Ringrose also shows that the magazine presents a great deal of variety within the basic genre of social poetry and he is led to conclude that "the Preview poetry fulfilled the strictures of the manifestoes and criticism in that it brought the consciousness of the group to bear upon the war and upon the society in which they were living."[43]

The poetry of Anderson and Page who were the central figures of the Preview group is expressed in a more private and personal voice than that which was characteristic of the Thirties. Although the group was in the broadest sense politically motivated, the Preview criticism shows that their primary interests were literary. Their writing is notable for its emphasis upon the psychological and emotional condition of the individual rather than for its concern with collective politics. In this it is similar in inspiration to the poetry which had already begun to appear in Contemporary Verse. It is also similar in its insistence upon social themes in which the individual is depicted as an isolated

victim of a general social malaise. There are certainly a number of poems such as Anderson's "Bombing Berlin" (P 18) and "For A Spanish Comrade" (P 11) which offer more overt political criticism, but the dominant impression left by the poetry of the group is its humanistic concern for people as individuals rather than its interest in collective ideals. A small sampling of the Preview poetry which Anderson and Page later included in their first published collections of verse provides evidence of this.

Patrick Anderson's "Winter In Montreal" appeared in Preview 21 and later in The White Centre (1946). The opening stanza illustrates his desire to express a particular state of mind by means of a characteristically overwrought system of imagery:

> Going home one night through the frozen fall
> I kicked a kettle of ice on the lonely street,
> scampered a black cat down the drifts of an alley
> where shadow was shot a Picasso was cantering:
> the wind came sliding up with no through a zero
> and over the raw-red parlours, ornate as wounds,
> the iodine blinds drew down in a brown shadow.

This perspective in which the frozen, confused, and wounded external world parallels the internal state of the observer, is widened as the poem continues. After the speaker asks "O when shall we be free of the winter palace?" various forms of isolation are depicted in sequence. First he takes the reader up among the egocentric skiers where "The snow like chloroform / masked my face." The location is then shifted to the hockey rink where he is among children who are completely engrossed in their own private world. It is not,

however, a world completely devoted to play for the observer finally sees their activity in terms of chaos: "In the climate of a mirror they moved and massed / and smashed their sticks in a season of frozen mist." The young hockey players, the skiers, and the observer's own isolated self are fused in the last stanzas of the poem into an expression of their collective insensitivity to the outside world. And although he is reminded of the larger significance of international turmoil, realizing that "those who live in the capitalists' crystal / surge like a revolutionary future about me," the final and strongest image is of himself in the isolation of his room with "double windows closed upon January." He is a writer, not a revolutionary, and he is safe in Montreal far from the dangers of war-torn Europe. He compares his own secure condition with the self-centered consciousness of the skiers and, in the end, confesses that his true feelings are those of guilt because he is a passive observer of the war rather than a participant in it. Despite his many attempts to justify the role of the poet in wartime, Anderson's attitude here provides insight into his personal and more honest feelings about himself as a man and a writer. As the snow slides off the roof he concludes:

> a crumpled thunder and faintness so far away
> that the listener does not stir nor the skier wake
> nor I, nor I. Drowsing upon this poem
> which puns and purrs in the gap the armies make.

Thus, although the speaker is acutely aware of international social and political problems, the poem centers upon his own troubled state of mind and his feelings of impotence, isolation,

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and guilt rather than upon propaganda or a devotion to the collective ideal.

This condition of isolation is also the subject of Anderson's "Portrait" (P 1) which too appeared later in The White Centre. Here again he describes a man alone in his room with only a suitcase of clothes and a typewriter. His physical exile from the world outside which is "flagged with the cries of newsboys," is symbolic of a more important spiritual exile in which he is left only with the drab furniture of his own consciousness. Described variously as a spy, a deserter, and a traveller, he is in any case a fugitive even from himself; a man who returns "unloved from the closet mirror / as sour milk and cinders." The tragic irony is that even in withdrawing into his own private world he must continue to live with a self he does not love, and this is the basis of his despair. The final image depicts him on the edge of madness, unable to find fulfillment in any way. But it is the state of mind itself rather than the reasons for it which most interests Anderson:

> the landlady below knew neither his fear
> nor his way with her furniture,
> nor how when fear drained fancy he would stare
> in terrible vacancy
> at a pattern of two roses round a twig
> or the leather buttons walking her horsehair sofa.

"Children," dedicated to P. K. Page, appeared in Preview 23 and subsequently in A Tent For April (1945). This poem shows that Anderson's view of the human condition was not always as bleak as the previous poems might suggest. His

attention here is upon the innocence of children "to whom everything happens but history" and celebrates their keen perception, their honesty, and the simple joy with which they encounter life. Unlike the adults who have lost the capacity for such vitality, the children who play "low down, close to the floor, beneath our attention," are in fact worthy of greater attention than they normally get. Only they can "make our love seem steep and dully wise," and in this they can be seen as superior beings. Thus they command attention, and even when "put to sleep, they fill the house / with the sound of their eyelashes." At times it even seems that they recognize their special status "and blow their whistles almost in contempt of our returning eyes." Anderson manages to present a view of the childrens' world which is both delightful and unromantic because he is concerned with observing their behavior and relating it to universal adult experience rather than with prophesying a bleak future for them or regretting the fact that they too must someday lose their innocent charm.

It is probable that Anderson's inspiration for this poem came from P. K. Page's "The Bands And The Beautiful Children" which she had published a few months before in Preview 19. This poem, which was later included in her first book, As Ten As Twenty (1946), presents a more tragic view of children than Anderson's but it expresses a similar love and sensitivity for the childhood experience. The children are seen as compulsive innocents who are naturally attracted

to the music and marching of the band as it "makes a tunnel of the open street." They follow the parade, joyfully imitating the musicians, completely unaware that parades must end and musicians must eventually return to being simple men. It is this discovery that all children must eventually make which allows them to distinguish between appearance and reality which constitutes maturity:

> But the children move
> in the trembling building of sound,
> sure as a choir
> until band breaks and scatters,
> crumbles about them and is made of men
> tired and grumbling
> on the straggling grass.

The tragedy is that once they have gained experience the children become, like all men, "lost, lost, / in an open space, / . . . their lips stiff from an imaginary trumpet."

The disillusioned lost children here are like the lovers in "Poem" (P 18) which also appeared in As Ten As Twenty. The two people in this poem attempt to avoid the harsh, brutal reality of life by secluding themselves in "a Catholic close / for innocence." The priests and nuns who inhabit the sanctuary with them are seen as people who have substituted faith for action and are therefore hiding from the world outside. Recognizing this, the lovers feel guilty about the choice they have made and they force themselves to see the truth that "death is common as grass beyond an ocean," and they resolve to "suddenly remember Guernica / and be gone." Like the children of "The Bands And The Beautiful Children," they find that illusions cannot last. Although

Page alludes here to the injustice and inhumanity of the war abroad, her main interest is in the psychology of individuals who attempt to isolate themselves from the truth. As in Anderson's "Winter In Montreal" and "Portrait," the emphasis is upon the personal feelings of guilt and the condition of stasis into which the solitary figures have fallen.

Another of Page's poems on this theme which was published in As Ten As Twenty and first appeared in Preview 13 is "Waking." Here the parallel with Anderson's personae is particularly evident. The sleeper in the poem is alone in her room but when she awakes she remembers "the crying cities of Europe / . . . [as] the brimming window / opens the bandaged eyes / to the shape of Asia." Again, however, it is her own psychological state of mind which becomes the centre of the poem and she sees herself alone and incapable of action; the victim of a malaise which cannot be conquered:

> Invalid, I --
> and crippled by sleep's illness,
> drowned in the milk of sheets
> and silk of dreams,
> I rise and write the rising curve of day
> with mercury of the smashed thermometer
> and trouble the silent mirror, who have been
> pale in suspension on the oval bed.

Thus the Preview poetry of Anderson and Page is markedly different from the proletarian poetry of the Thirties both in its use of exotic and startling imagery and in its concern with the psychological and emotional condition of the individual under stress. Although this anxiety is often shown to be the result of the dehumanizing nature of the immediate social

environment or an impotent awareness of the global suffering caused by the war, these political and social issues are secondary to the poets' personal desire to explore the complexity of human consciousness itself.

A study of the poetry which Preview published by contributors who were outside "the group" is valuable to the extent that it shows the type of work that they accepted as editors. Presumably the outside contributions reflect their editorial position and provide a sampling of poetry, other than their own, which is most in keeping with their critical principles.

The poetry that Preview accepted for publication is indeed striking in its variety. It ranges from the tiny personal lyrics of Alice Eedy to more ambitious attempts at expressing universal themes in poems such as A. G. Bailey's "Plague Burial" and "Graph." Several writers contributed groups of poems which were printed in various issues. Miriam Waddington is an example. Her poems appeared intermittently through December of 1943. All reveal her characteristic sensitivity toward the emotions of others and frequently, as in "Uncertainties," and "Crystal" there is an intensely personal confessional tone. "Uncertainties" (P 10), deals with the consistent human need for love even in times which provide no certainty that love will be returned. The poem expresses a sense of personal angst which results from a general disillusionment with her world. Thus, she concludes with pessimistic certainty that: "I send you the message of

my odd love / Across a world in which love no longer matters, / I send you the message knowing it will not reach you." This feeling that love has gone from the world is overridden by the natural impulse to seek it out even though the attempted communication may be futile. This sense of loss which results from the desperate attempt to make contact with another human being in a world which has forgotten love is imaginatively fulfilled in "The Crystal" (P 15). In this poem the speaker achieves a sense of freedom and oneness with the natural universe by associating her own emotional confinement with the physical confinement of the butterfly within its chrysalis. Her hope is that the day will come when the walls will "crack suddenly" and "uncup me into large and windy space." The feeling of being unnaturally alien and alone in one's society is a common Preview theme and by articulating and formalizing it, the poets are fulfilling Anderson's desire for art which emphasises the importance of the individual in an increasingly collective society. Waddington's poem "The Lovers" (P 15), deals with the loneliness of separated lovers by rationalizing, in the metaphysical manner of Donne, that they are together spiritually even though they have become physically isolated from each other.

War imagery plays a part in two of her poems although the war itself is not their main concern. In "Girls" (P 14), the speaker is a mother who is considering the effect that time and growth will have upon the innocence of her daughters. Their eager "light flushed faces" are beautiful but the mother

realizes that they are vulnerable and threatened: "I see over your shoulders the years like a fascist army / Advancing against your love, burning your maiden villages." The future does not hold much promise of happiness for the girls. They will naturally lose their innocence and virginity as women and they will come to realize the harsher realities of life. But through the image of the advancing army, Waddington also implies that their future world may be socially and politically unpleasant as well. Her role, therefore, is to ease their suffering as best she can through self sacrifice: "I offer myself, a splint against your sorrows, / And I kiss the broken wings of your future." The daughters will surely be victims of time and aging but it is the added fear that they may also be the unnatural casualties of a brutal social environment which deepens the tension of the poem. "Rocky Mountain Train" (P 17) is also concerned with the kind of life that children of the future will lead. The train full of soldiers is travelling through the beautiful scenery of the Rockies and the speaker is listening to the rhythm of the wheels which appear at first to be saying "Never let children be born, never let children be born." The act of bringing children into a world which is so attuned to war that soldiers and evidence of the military cannot be avoided even on a civilian train through the mountains, seems useless and unfair. The splendid scenery through which they are passing, however, leads the observer to consider the possibility that the soldiers represent a better future and that they are

fighting so that children can be born into a peaceful world. Thus she concludes with the song of the mountains which is in optimistic contrast to the original song of the wheels on the track: "the mountains sang up and down their distance / Of sons thick as cedars, daughters fair as birches, children still to grow like smooth, strong forests, / To hold the slipping soil and force their roots / Into the slopes of the future." Waddington's poems as a group express the prevailing social mood of insecurity in the present and uncertainty about the future. Her persona is a figure who tries to reconcile the human need for love and compassion with a social environment which isolates individuals and deprives them of love. Apparently this attitude was received sympathetically by contemporary magazine editors because Miriam Waddington's poems appeared frequently in the pages of First Statement, Direction, and Contemporary Verse as well as in Preview. Of all the poets who began publishing regularly in the early Forties, her work was most universally accepted. Although she was not associated with founding or editing any of the magazines, her ability to relate to the contemporary environment and the problems of the individual within it provided the magazines with poetry which represented their critical ideals. This suggests that Waddington's poems which combined social awareness with skillful poetic technique express the critical temper of the times better than those of any other writer who was not directly associated with magazine editing. Her emphasis upon the isolation of the individual in a collect-

ive society seems to be what was most attractive to the editors of Preview because the other writers they published often dealt with similar themes.

This theme of loneliness and isolation is continued in the poems of Alice Eedy. Her work is less successful than Waddington's not only because the poems are fragmentary and fail to fully realize their potential but also because she is satisfied to simply express an emotional experience or a state of mind without relating it to a larger social or personal ethic.

In "The Bell And The Copper Tone" (P 14), for example, the poet is led to associate the sound of the bells with a rather vague awareness of "the strange longings of people." Other poems, like "Cold," "Sounds," "Heavy," and "Little," all of which appeared in Preview 17, are minute attempts to capture the essence of these qualities for their own sake. Characteristically they are most concerned with loneliness or sadness without a context whereby her feelings can be given special significance. "Cold," is an illustration of her technique: "Stand still / and let the wind blow through you- / And have greatness of cold and gravel / knowing the cold gravelly substances / the steel runners of aloneness." Somehow by associating coldness with gravel and steel runners a statement about "aloneness" is made. How, or to what end, is not made clear. "Heavy" is a similar type of poem in which the quality of heaviness is cryptically associated with a diffuse "savage sadness / like a flower under water." These

intensely private impressions of the writer's response to her environment are quite different from any other poems which appeared in the magazine. They appear to have been chosen because of their personal tone and their experimental technique of expressing one individual's feelings of alienation.

A. M. Klein, who was a peripheral member of the Preview group, also contributed several poems to the magazine. The fact that they are so unlike those of the others of the group and that he published just as many poems in First Statement as in Preview, suggests that he was a member in name only. Klein's association with them added a dimension of prestige to the magazine but unlike Anderson and Page, for example, his literary life did not primarily revolve around it. Klein's poems, while maintaining a consistently critical tone, are of various kinds and quality. "Actuarial Report" and "Commercial Bank" are social satires; "Dentist" is a whimsical account of a visit to the archetypal dentist's office; "Montreal," which appeared in the explanatory issue, is an experimental attempt to create a bilingual poem while "Green Old Age" bitterly questions society's attitude toward the aged. "Variation on a Theme" explores reasons why death must be accepted, and "Bread" deals indirectly with the simple, fundamental things on which people in every culture depend. All of the poems, however, are within the social genre. "Actuarial Report" (P 12) and "Commercial Bank" (P 19) are both Kafkaesque visions of the world of commerce. In the former poem the actuaries, envisioned as modern day magi, have

taken stock of the human condition during the previous year. The poem describes their report which is complete with an "appended-graph" showing "the hanging gardens of death . . . tier by tier." Their forecast is that death will become more prevalent and that their policy holders will increase in numbers due to earthquakes, pestilence, dangerous intersections, and the human "will to self-destruction" which has brought about a general "state of hostilities." The poem continues by relating other possibilities and outlining the current social problems which portend a bleak future for mankind:

> It is true, of course, we have the saving war-cause.
> Nonetheless, there are risks, perils, and bad luck
> Remote from the battlefield, but laying
> The dead hand on our deeds.
> Such are anxiety, trouble at home, measured rations
> The abnormalities of separation; in fine,
> General absence of felicity.

These are the problems that their "spying" upon contemporary society has revealed. The actuaries wish that "like the magi of old" they could bring good news that "a son is born," but under present circumstances they must conclude: "Regrettably, all that we can see for the present fiscal year / Is many a father dying." This poem shows that Klein at this time was still writing social satire similar in voice and technique to that which he published during the Thirties in Canadian Forum and New Frontier. This would suggest that he equated poetry and the role of the poet more directly with social criticism than did the younger members of the Preview group who generally preferred a more oblique literary approach. The same may be

said of F. R. Scott, who as the senior member, also shows an interest in direct, biting social satire.'[44]

In "Commercial Bank," Klein conforms well to the magazine's editorial affinity for arresting imagery and metaphysical union of opposites. Here he describes the interior of the bank in exotic, jungle imagery. The metaphor linking the commercial world with the jungle environment is only apt in so far as it suggests that both are based upon survival of the fittest. The actual description of the bank itself as "a flowering-jungle, where all fauna meet / Crossing the marbled floor" is too surreal to be effective; especially when the tellers are seen as "prompted parrots" who seek to "entreat / the kernel'd hoard," and the money in the vaults is described as "flora" which "none can seek" because of the bank guards who are "armed unicorn(s), furred blue and gold." Even the alarm buttons attached to "vines fatal" are "berries, that touched, shriek." The poem becomes more effective at its conclusion when Klein associates the quiet atmosphere of the bank with the ominous quiet of the jungle. Even though the quiet killers of the banking world are "toothless, with drawn nails," they too deal in "fierce deaths expiring with no sound." At this point the poem becomes a severe indictment of the ruthless and inhuman principles on which the commercial world is based. It is symptomatic of a general social malaise in which the integrity of the individual and the primacy of human values are being destroyed by dispassionate commercial greed.

It is this same contemporary society which allows the aged to die slowly without dignity. Klein takes up this theme in "The Green Old Age" (P 22). In this poem he asks the reader to "Pity who wear the castoffs of the years / Passing in a clown's clothes the unclownish ones, / With boldness on head, and hairiness in ears." The old are to be pitied because in a society which does not care for them they are allowed to deteriorate physically and mentally to the state of infancy "where neither shanks nor sphinctre will behave." Thus, the speaker is thankful for the doctors who choose to perform euthanasia and put an end to the "waxing of these mooned monstrosities." This cynical view of current society is continued in "Variation On A Theme" (P 5). Using medieval language, Klein stresses the ancient presence of death. It has appealed to mankind for generations and in return man has: "Knelled him soft names in . . . a muted rhythm; / Or, vault-face, trumpeted my herald breath / Into Gold Gotha echoes of his fame." After listing the various ways in which men (and the poet in particular) have been "enamort" of death, he concludes that death has come calling once more: "Again my brooder, comes to call for me, / And more that ever, mortal, it seems rich to die." Death holds a natural attraction for mankind and especially in the modern world, his reverence for it seems deep.

Klein's cynicism is modified in "Bread" (P 19). Here he manages to secure a delicate balance between the trivial and the profound. The sustained metaphor which sanctifies and

exaggerates the significance of bread in the development of human civilization is at times humorous as in the following example:

> O black-bread hemisphere, oblong of rye,
> Crescent and circle of the seeded bun,
> All art is builded on your geometry,
> All science explosive from your captive sun.

This praise is taken to its logical and absurd conclusion in the last stanza which depicts bakers as priests to whom the speaker hopes he and mankind will be bound "forever in your ritual, your / Worship and prayer." In light of the previous poems, however, it is possible to understand "Bread" on another more serious level. Klein is using the metaphor of the bread in order to celebrate the simple values and the simple needs which have been historically at the root of social and cultural development. These are the values which are often lost in the complexity of modern society and they represent the values which must be rediscovered before it is too late. In this way the poem can be construed as a positive social directive rather than what Neufville Shaw referred to in "The Maple Leaf Is Dying" (P 17) as "a ruthless analysis of social falsehood."

Despite his more common poetic role as an angry and cynical critic of society, Klein published the only genuinely humorous poem to appear in the magazine. Indeed, one of the impressions that Preview leaves upon the present day reader is that the poets took themselves too seriously. The ability of a poem to entertain its reader played no part in their understanding of the function of poetry or the role of the

poet. Klein's "Dentist" (P 20) is, therefore, a refreshing deviation from the norm. His rather articulate curse upon the dentist who has caused him pain is a good example of Klein's linguistic dexterity as well as an indication that he must have taken great pleasure in the role of angry victim:

> May thirty-two curses blight that torturer!
> May his gums soften! May he lose his friends
> Turning in silence from his exhalations!
> His tinsel wreath
> Fall from his mouth, abscessed, with clotted gore
> At its forked ends!
> Thirty-two curses on his thirty-two teeth!

In Preview 20 James Wreford was introduced by a special note which indicates that he had joined the magazine as a contributing editor. The three poems by him which were included were perhaps partly responsible for the fact that the next number of the magazine was the explanatory issue. Wreford's Preview poems are examples of the group's affinity for social content presented in a manner so oblique that it sometimes borders on obscurantism. "Comrade, Look Not To The Hill" is his most straight-forward poem but curiously, it seems to violate the editor's desire for modernism in its use of inverted syntax, rhyming couplets, and vague didacticism. The first part provides evidence of this:

> Comrade look not to the hill
> help is in your iron will,
> heaven affords no higher aid
> than experiment and spade,
> till world entirely yours
> imperishable from your wars
> shall in your soaring spirit find
> the larger landscape of the mind . . .

Except for the suspicious word "comrade," one would expect to find this poem in the heavily criticized Voices Of Victory

rather than in the pages of Preview. It is a rather awkward statement of the need for self-determination in discovering "the larger landscape of the mind" and a "high objective in mankind." The emphasis on such vague ambitions is carried through at the end of the poem in the diffuse affirmation that "God shall keep your soul at last / who have kept his heavens fast." The only thing that might associate this poem with the Preview poetic is its expression of ultimate faith in the strength of the individual human spirit. Other than this, it seems strangely archaic and out of place in a magazine which sought to print poetry full of "the feel of people."

Wreford's poem "Identity" (P 20) is more oblique but not any more modern in technique and language. After beginning with a rather pleasant image in which: "The steep hills run against the tree / shadows are branches and the light / a bunch of needles in the leaves / sharpened and polished by the night," the poem, by mentioning Freud and associating the murderer with the lover through a mixture of sexual and platonic imagery, deteriorates into an intellectual exercise which seems most concerned with testing the reader's intelligence. It is meant to reveal the complexity of human psychological identity but fails because of its own self indulgent obscurity. "The Mental Butterfly" (P 20) is closer in inspiration to "Comrade Look Not To The Hill." Here the metaphysical technique is obvious from the first lines: "For fear of loving let us love / against the iron talk / of the

exalted aeroplane." The poem goes on to express the triumph of human sensitivity and capacity for love in the face of a war-torn world and the overwhelming oppression of technological progress. This in itself seems to have justified the editors' decision to publish it because the last stanza places the poem in the tradition of romantic sentimentality which they so forcefully opposed:

> The singing heart goes through the woods
> as if they had not ceased to sing,
> and in the mind the butterfly
> floats on an eternal spring.

The only other poem that Wreford published in the magazine appeared in Preview 23. Typically, it deals with the intangible "new desire" of the future which is to understand the world in a more comprehensive, expansive way. The title, "Aerial Survey," suggests this broad scope and the poem views the world as a giant landscape of mountains and hills which only suggest the limits of human vision. Wreford's poems are curiosities in Preview because of their dependence upon traditional form and their tendency to deal with such subjects as the triumph of the human will, the necessity of social vision, the diffuse nature of individual identity, and the need for spiritual courage. His poetry provides an insight into one of the principal contradictions between the Preview critical poetic and the Preview poetry. Although the editors paid lip-service to the belief that modern poetry should tend toward simple and direct expression and should rely more upon concrete subjects than abstractions, in practice

they found this difficult to achieve. Their interest in maintaining a high level of literary sophistication by avoiding chichés and blatant social propaganda often led them in the direction of metaphysical expression and abstraction both in the poetry they wrote themselves and in that they accepted from others. It will later be shown that this conflict of interest was one of the main sources of antagonism between the Preview group and the First Statement writers. Those associated with First Statement felt that Preview did not go far enough in its attempt to "humanize" poetry because it was too interested in literary sophistication inspired by Eliot, Auden, Spender, and Thomas and not interested enough in communicating with the average Canadian reader. This was also what led A. J. M. Smith to his conclusion that Preview represented a "cosmopolitan" attitude toward poetry and the poet while First Statement was closer to representing a "native" tradition.

It is interesting in this regard that Preview published two poems by writers usually associated with the attitudes of First Statement. Ronald Hambleton's "Incidence In An All Night Cafe" and Raymond Souster's "Queen Street Serenade" are almost completely opposite in language, subject matter, and technique to Wreford's poems. Both deal with the immediate, tangible present in simple terms. Hambleton's poem (P 6), for example, begins with the rather unpoetic, naturalistic observation that: "Twice tonight there was haggling over the bill. / In the cafe where the mildewed

track / Of loneliness persisted . . ." Souster's "Queen Street Serenade" (P 7) is much the same in theme and atmosphere describing the futile existence of the social derelicts who inhabit the casinos of Queen Street. For them, "both sides of the coin" always come up the same. These poems are, however, the only two of this type published in the magazine.

The characteristics of the poetry of those who published several times in Preview are, with the exception of the two above, also found in the work of individual contributors. Mark Edmund Gordon's "Sounds And Wraiths On An Iron Fence" (P 9) presents a picture of urban man engulfed in a nightmarish cacophony of sounds. The sounds suggest that he has been robbed of his ability to obtain any degree of leisure or pleasure from life. His world instead is one where kitchen taps squeak "a lonely Sibelius adagio" and the opening of tin cans is "like a lilting Bartok scherzo." Urban man has become a victim of his environment and he is not only dying physically but culturally as well. This same theme is echoed in Kay Smith's "Fall Fair" (P 10). In this poem contemporary society is seen as a carnival which offers confusion and trickery rather than an opportunity for abandonment and pleasure. It is a world in which: "the hour is not appropriate to the childish hope / that the wheel may stop at a lucky number / there is no lucky number there is nothing here / to dope the ulcerated tooth." Thus the people who are a part of the carnival are offered no hope at all and are condemned by the social decisions of the past to live a life

where "the child must drag at your skirt / continue to howl out of pain and rage / having to bite on the hard crust of his heritage."

Less pessimistic views of the human condition are expressed by Anne Marriott and Patrick Waddington. Marriott's poem, "Parable" (P 13) associates the world with the "shifting, dull-white uneasiness" of fog through which only a small amount of sunlight can penetrate. She assures the reader, however, that the future will be different, for just as one has faith that overcast weather cannot last forever, one knows that "wind from decisive, human dwarfing sea / will cut away this fog, / leave a strong land action-ready, / outlines sure." "Hills Of Anger" (P 15) by Patrick Waddington offers a similar hope and views society as a train which has run off "the main tracks of history." Despite the industrial pollution and the devastation of war which has left Europe "gap-toothed," he has ultimate faith that mankind will endure and that society will return to the track that leads "through our death / To that frontier where we may discern / Homes of the untroubled laugh, the untortured breath." Preview 13 included an epigrammatic exercise by Ralph Gustafson as follows: "Starless now is he who owns / Egregiously these grounded bones: / Silence, his pain who vainly brings / A quill to him that died on wings." Dennis Giblin's "Water Poem" (P 23) is reminiscent of the exercises of Alice Eedy. He is concerned with describing an emotional state for its own sake. It proposes an escape into the self where there is "no world

and time [is] tranquil and unaimed."

A. G. Bailey contributed two poems to the magazine. In Preview 6 "Graph" presents the world's fortune through a mixed metaphor which combines the images of the business graph, the electrical arc, and the comet. All of them mark out a curvature which falls from its apex to a low point which signifies the current level of social achievement. He concludes by interpreting the trend in terms of impending tragedy and advises men to: "Placate these cycles with an upward swing, / for fan the flame, and power rule the blast." His poem "Plague Burial" (P 15), however, is the most ambitious attempt at a universal social statement by a writer outside the group to appear in Preview. Viewing the world as one which is infected by plague, he tries to strike a parallel between the coffin which will eventually hold human bones and the coffin into which dead human values have been placed. The plague is thus a metaphor for the social malaise which the world has contracted. The theme of the "sick" society is fairly common in Preview and Bailey's poem serves as a kind of definitive statement of it. The technique and inspiration are Eliotic and the equation between Eliot's waste-land and Bailey's plague infested universe is evident. The ending of the poem provides ample proof of Eliot's influence:

> The drawn blind, the day that does not break.
> Tread lightly lest someone wake
> to sense the peace that passeth here.
> Handle the creaking hinge with fear
> and into the yard tread softly
> over by the chicken coop
> dig us a hole, say five feet and a bit.

A close fit, 'twill closer bye and bye
There is no need for too much blue sky
for bones.
Spade and gravel grate,
A hen squawks like a throat torn open
Hurry! It grows late.

Bailey's pessimistic view is more characteristic of Preview than the poetry which holds out a hope for social stability and justice after the war has ended. The magazine always stressed the important role of the writer during wartime and Anderson's vision of the poet as "humanist leader of the modern movement" can be seen as the ideal upon which the Preview poetic was founded. But the poetry of the magazine tends toward a negative view of the present rather than a positive view of the future.

Two unsigned letters to the editor taking opposite positions with regard to the function of poetry and the contemporary influences affecting it were published by Alan Crawley in Contemporary Verse 8 in June of 1943. They are interesting reflections on the prevailing attitude toward the poetry which Preview was publishing at the time as well as that which was appearing in Crawley's magazine. The first letter takes issue with Preview as well as Contemporary Verse for the following reasons:

It may seem all right to keep on publishing Auden but why try to repeat Eliot as well? Isn't the time for that passing? Anyway, this perpetual whining about the terrible state of things has lost its freshness. One might say it did so some time since. Satire, with some bite to it, and specific objects of attack, might be of more interest- as positive rather than negative- than these fragments from the slightly crumbling Eliot-Auden wailing-wall.[45]

Whereas the writer of this letter was discouraged by the

tendency toward pessimism and the negative approach to reality which had its roots in the early poetry of Auden and Eliot, the writer of the opposing letter saw this as a healthy sign because it placed the Canadian approach to modern poetry in the mainstream of an important international literary movement:

> One grows in understanding and in appreciation of what is the present reality of letters on reading C.V. It is a thrill to share in that universal element which it has discovered for us in our national experiments and to realize that we are part of a world wide movement, and not such an insignificant part at that. I am a great admirer, as you may have guessed, of both the Eliot and Auden traditions in modern writing. I think they have produced incontestably the best contemporary verse, and along with G. M. Hopkins have done more to revivify poetry as a whole than any writer since the early Romanticists.[46]

These two letters illustrate the contemporary critical conflict with regard to the state of Canadian poetry in the Forties. They also indicate that the poets of the 1940's were no longer the voices of a utopian future. Whereas Contemporary Verse sought only to publish the best poetry available, Preview had a somewhat narrower editorial policy. The fact is, however, that both printed a variety of poetry which was almost entirely within the social genre. The Preview group took pride in their desire to elevate modern poetry beyond the level of propaganda and invective into the realm of sophisticated literature with international significance. Their ambitious attitude toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet initiated a renewed interest in the aesthetic excellence of Canadian poetry rather than in its function as a vehicle for sentimental patriotism or social

propaganda. They were writing, however, during a period of transition, one of the best illustrations of which is their constant and often futile attempts to reconcile the aesthetic function of poetry with the social function through a fusion of lyric and didactic elements. The poetry of Preview and Contemporary Verse indicates a gradual turning away from the "public speech" of the Thirties toward a more private voice which had a closer association with the individual than with collective politics. There were those, however, who felt that Preview did not go far enough in its efforts to "humanize" poetry and who considered the group's attempt to associate themselves with cosmopolitan literary sophistication somewhat pretentious. Thus, with a different set of aims in mind, John Sutherland, who had been refused when he asked to join the Preview group,[7] brought out First Statement: A Magazine For Young Canadian Writers shortly after Preview had published its third issue.

iii First Statement

Whereas the first editorial of Preview took the form of a little manifesto with specific political and literary aims, Sutherland's opening First Statement editorial was closer in tone and general attitude to that of Crawley's in Contemporary Verse. Sutherland emphasized the need for a means by which modern poetry could be published and brought to the public and he anticipated those critics who "will say

that we are talking in a vacuum, to ourselves alone, and be making gestures that have reference to nothing."[48] Feeling that the gesture itself was the important purpose behind First Statement 1, Sutherland gave a more specific account of the raison d'etre of the magazine in the third issue:

> . . . the business of a Canadian magazine, in a country where the literature receives a minimum of publicity, is to serve Canadian writers only, and to direct its attention primarily to the Canadian public. Hence our desire to exhibit, without discriminating against any, the various modes and types of writing as we find them in Canada. We would like to become the mirror of this variety, and so provide the Canadian reader with the freedom of choice that he requires.[49]

Sutherland here provides the first evidence of a Canadian literary nationalism which later often reached chauvinistic intensity. One of his principal objections to the Preview group, for example, was their tendency to emulate the English modern poets rather than develop a North American voice and style of their own. Like Crawley, he sought poetic variety rather than poetry with particular aesthetic and political characteristics. In a later editorial he indicates that he also shared Crawley's belief in the role of the little magazine as a means of stimulating literary growth "that is rooted in Canadian soil."[50] Sutherland's obsession with Canadianism is symptomatic of a growing general interest in the cultural ethos of the country and one of the main purposes that First Statement associated with the role of the poet and the function of poetry was stimulating the Canadian public's cultural awareness. Although Preview and Contemporary Verse were also interested in this aspect of the function of poetry,

First Statement made the advancement of Canadian culture one of its major objectives. First Statement also emphasized the need for salient criticism if this objective was to be met. This was made clear in the first issue with Sutherland's statement that: "We intend to publish, from time to time, criticisms of the following magazines: Contemporary Verse, Music and the Arts, Canadian Poetry Magazine, and Preview." The issue also included a criticism of a story of Bruce Ruddick which had appeared in Preview 3. The Preview writers often came under direct or indirect attack from the First Statement critics. Although there was no spiteful animosity between the two magazines in the beginning (Page and Anderson published a total of ten poems in the first seven numbers), there were differences in critical point of view. Being closer to the Preview group than any other writers, it is quite likely that Sutherland considered himself best qualified to criticize them. It is interesting, however, that he shares a great many of their aesthetic premises as well. Writing of "P. K. Page and Preview" in First Statement I,6, Sutherland expressed agreement with her desire "to write of people in general" as a "relief from introspection," and he finds laudable her talent for "looking outwards towards humanity."[51] Characteristically he has reason to be critical as well, finding fault with her overwrought emotion, overwhelming phrasing, uneasiness of style, and frequent subjectivity. The point is, however, that Sutherland admired as much about the Preview writers as he disliked. What he disliked most

seems to have been their affinity for the modern English poets, their tendency toward metaphysical complexity, and their operation as a literary clique.

From the early existence of First Statement, Sutherland was interested in giving the magazine a national significance in order to avoid parochialism and to better represent Canada. In the fifth number he announced the magazine's amalgamation with Geoffrey Ashe's Western Free Lance. Ashe had brought out one issue of the magazine in September of 1942 but upon hearing of First Statement and agreeing with its policy, he wrote to Sutherland suggesting the affiliation in order to provide coast-to-coast representation. Ashe then became the British Columbia agent for First Statement, "Western Free Lance" appeared on the cover page, and some Western writers (notably Dorothy Livesay, Anne Marriott, and Floris McLaren) were published. Although First Statement apparently did not gain any great degree of national significance, Sutherland tried throughout its existence to achieve this aim. In addition to Ashe in Vancouver, he solicited Lois Darroch as Toronto agent and he proposed (in a manner reminiscent of New Frontier) that First Statement groups be formed across the country as "a logical outcome of the magazine- to foster Canadianism and Canadian literature."[52] The various titles given the magazine also are indicative of Sutherland's national ambitions. For the first nine issues it was called "A Magazine For Young Canadian Writers"; in numbers ten through thirteen it was "A Canadian Literary Magazine"; for

the next five issues it was subtitled "A National Literary Magazine," and after the first printed number (II,1 August 1943) it was more broadly termed "Canadian Poetry And Prose." Thus, First Statement attempted to define the function of poetry and the role of the poet more in terms of a Canadian context than a cosmopolitan one. Unlike Preview, the magazine was not concerned with publishing the work of a literary group and those writers (particularly Irving Layton, Louis Dudek, and Raymond Souster) usually associated with First Statement were never so tightly knit as the Preview poets.

Sutherland's literary nationalism did not include a reverence for "the maple leaf school" of poetry. Just as F. R. Scott and Neufville Shaw had deplored its continuing existence in anthologies and in magazines like the Canadian Poetry Magazine, Sutherland brought an attack against Crucible magazine for similar reasons.[53] He expressed his point of view in greater detail in an editorial entitled "The Two Schools":

> When A. J. M. Smith declared in the Toronto Quarterly that the Romantic tradition in Canada was dead, he must have meant that it had lost its power to stimulate poetry. He could not have meant that it was dead in any other sense. Of the several hundred manuscripts that we received as a mimeographed magazine, about eighty-five percent were directly in the romantic tradition. [The idea that Canadians' have of poetry depends upon tenth-rate Tennyson that is dished out to them by a host of amateur writers.] As long as the Canadian Authors Association, the fecund womb of romanticism, remains powerful as it is, the national imagination will be molded by stale modes of writing and thinking. This organization is not dead, nor is it in any danger of dying.[54]

Besides providing the first hint of Sutherland's animosity toward A. J. M. Smith which later found more complete

definition in his "Introduction" to Other Canadians, this editorial shows his interest in freeing the "national imagination" from "stale modes of writing and thinking." This objective was also shared by the Preview writers who offered their poetry as an example of modern experimentation with contemporary subject matter. Sutherland, however, correctly sensed that their poetry was often too subjective and complex to perform its intended function of communicating with the average reader. Thus he proposed that modern Canadian poetry be more simple and direct. Sutherland's disagreement was not so much with the subject matter of the Preview poetry as with its technique and language.

He recognized the qualities he preferred in the early poetry of Louis Dudek whom he referred to as follows in First Statement I,12:

> He has written one beautiful poem, with an amazingly flexible cadence, simply describing the fall of leaves in autumn. Then he has written love poems of the same direct and simple quality. He does not say to himself, as one of our modernist poets does, "You are as tall as Europe, I as Asia": he remembers himself as a man and his lover as a woman.[55]

The modernist poet quoted is Patrick Anderson whose "Love Poem" had appeared in Preview 9. Sutherland saw a pretention that smacked of dishonesty in many of Anderson's poems and his use of the term "modernist" was always equated with those writers whom he felt were trying to be overly sophisticated and profound. Sutherland also found some virtue in using nature as well as society for the subject matter of poetry. Whether or not the First Statement writers actually met to discuss Lampman and Carman as Anderson accused in

Preview 11, there was no doubt that Sutherland drew a connection between a simple response to nature and honest poetry. Whereas people held different social and political views, all shared their natural environment in common and by making use of it in poetry the writer could not only sincerely express his own humanity but could also draw a response from readers who were perhaps more interested in life than in art. Speaking of Irving Layton, Kay Smith, and Louis Dudek in this context Sutherland commented: "What I should like to stress about all three poets . . . is their common interest in nature."[56] His final summary is a general explanation of the difference between the Preview and First Statement critical positions:

> I feel about Dudek's poetry precisely as I do about Layton's and Kay Smith's. Here are three poets, not lacking in imagination and intellectual power, who are producing work that is much more honest and wholesome than that of our modernist school . . . They represent a fusion of modern and traditional elements. Their work is part of an exciting new tendency towards unity that is observable also in Contemporary Verse and in poems appearing elsewhere in Canada.[57]

Although Sutherland's terms "honest" and "wholesome" are too vague, his affinity for poetry which "represents a fusion of modern and traditional elements" is more helpful in determining his critical position at this time. By "traditional" it is clear that he is referring to those qualities which he considers to have been traditionally Canadian rather than traditionally English. One of these would be a willingness to express human nature through a sensitive response to the physical world. This is a characteristic that Sutherland also admired in Earle Birney.[58] But his interest in nature as a

sign of native Canadianism, was only one aspect of a more important interest in a poetic simplicity which would place the poet in closer contact with the public. It was Sutherland's belief that the "modernist" poets, most obviously represented by Preview, had divorced themselves from the general public and thus had compromised the "humanizing" function of poetry. Sutherland's objections to the style of Dylan Thomas which had influenced the Preview writers, clarifies his position in this regard. He suggested in First Statement II,4 that Thomas' use of metaphor as a poetic standard allowed him to employ obscurity as a defence against the acceptance of the universe.[59] This was essentially the same criticism he brought against Canadian modernists and one of the interesting ways in which the First Statement poetic differs from that of Preview is in its contention that poetry should make an effort to accept society rather than depending too exclusively upon the constant criticism of it.

This point of view is discussed by Louis Dudek in First Statement I,20. Apart from Sutherland, Dudek was the most important critic to be published in the magazine. His articles often elaborate upon the general principles outlined by Sutherland and his poems attempt to embody them artistically. The article which is salient in the present context, entitled "Poets of Revolt . . . or Reaction," however, brings two important characteristics of the First Statement poetic to light: namely, the writers' tendency to look to the United

States as well as Canada for their literary models and their desire to view themselves as "proletarian" poets of experience. Dudek extends Sutherland's concept of "Canadianism" to include all of North America and he sees a special influence coming from the social realism of Carl Sandburg: "The influence of Carl Sandburg prevails very generally among the younger Canadian writers. It can be noted occasionally as an influence if [sic] free verse style, the poetic approach, and also in the choice of subject matter: a tendency to pick up poems on street corners."[60] This type of "proletarian" honesty is further equated with the tradition of Whitman and Masters and Dudek assures those modern poets who would like to see themselves as part of the tradition that: "We are with the most American of Americans."[61] This, for Dudek and for the First Statement writers generally, is the more healthy (perhaps Sutherland would have said "wholesome") sphere of influence. This view is, of course, in sharp contrast to the English inspired literary elitism that the First Statement writers associated with Preview. Dudek takes exception to one particularly prevalent example of their negative influence:

> But an element altogether foreign to this one [Sandburg's social realism] enters into much of modern poetry, a destructive element, which Canadian writers have been no wise behindhand in adopting . . . this element, occasional among First Statement contributors, becomes rampant in Preview Magazine, in any issue, in any poem . . . this is what C. Day Lewis terms the "comical-satiric" vein in modern poetry . . . The difference lies in that Sandburg "accepts the universe," just as Walt Whitman, his ancestor did. But our leading modern poets do not accept the universe: the universe of the contemporary social scene.[62]

Dudek further argues that Sandburg can accept the universe because he has no illusions about life. He has lived a proletarian, working class existence and his poetry is a natural product of it. Various occupations and experiences have put him in close touch with society and, unlike Eliot and other intellectuals (including the Preview group), his awareness has not been conditioned by upper-middle class cultural values. Thus, the "modernist" poets are using naturalistic subject matter in an artificial way because they are not naturally disposed to it. The common people like Sandburg have lived the life they write about and thus can produce art which is more honest and more easily accessible to the average reader. For this reason, Dudek considers the modernists who have been influenced by Eliot, Auden, Spender, and Thomas as reactionaries rather than revolutionaries for the most part. The real revolutionaries are the social realists who have been influenced by North American writers such as Masters and Sandburg. In more specifically Canadian terms, the First Statement writers considered poetry most valid if it was rooted in honest emotion rather than intellectual or political beliefs. Alluding to the Preview poetic in this regard, Dudek concludes: "Whether some of these poets are also reformers and socialists is beside the point: their mental solution is less important than their inner conflicts and urges. By these they betray that they 'do not belong.'"[6]

This, then, can be seen as the most fundamental difference between the First Statement attitude toward poetry

and the role of the poet and that of Preview. Although Dudek's condemnation is exaggerated, there is a significant difference between the Preview and First Statement poetry when it is compared in this respect. His attitude, along with Sutherland's, indicates that the two magazines were based on different though not opposing, literary values with regard to social poetry.

Dudek continues his argument that poetry cannot be brought to the Canadian public by poets who are out of touch with the practical realities of society in his other First Statement articles. They can, in fact, be read as a continuous essay on the same theme. Although he was later to become an academic himself, at this time Dudek could easily criticize the lack of vitality in the work of academic poets. In "Academic Literature" which appeared in First Statement II,8, he does exactly this and attacks the Canadian cultural milieu as well. He sees the country as "essentially commercial and dead to anything like literature."[64] and therefore lacking a public which is receptive to poetry. Here Dudek implies what Sutherland frequently contended: that one of the important responsibilities of the poet is to increase the level of cultural awareness by writing a type of social poetry to which the public can relate. Academic poets, however, work against this objective not only because "what they learn from libraries overbalances and spoils much of their poetry," but more importantly because they "are out of real everyday contact with the main currents of contemporary life."[65]

In "Geography, Poetry and Politics" published in First Statement I,16, Dudek enumerates three tendencies which "are hostile to the natural desire of poets to react honestly . . . first hand." These he says are: "(1) a clever aptitude for exploiting the unreal universe of language (2) a pedantic absorption in the second-hand universe of books, literature, and erudition; and (3) a falsified devotion to a special universe of ideas, chiefly sociological and political ideas."[66] These for him are signs of "dishonest" poetry and he explains his position in detail as follows:

> . . . In short, what is wrong with today's social preaching in poetry is that it is likely to be falsified preaching. It is likely to show the influence of "upper class," highly cultured, intellectual spirit. Its writers may not be aristocrats, but they have learned the separateness, subtleity [sic], and love-of-culture of the aristocracy. They are simply not plebeian enough. We have in Montreal a magazine, Preview, in which much of the work illustrates exactly this point.
>
> By way of correction, First Statement can suggest three slogans for the poet's masthead. No polyglot displays. No poems about poets and poetry. No high party politics.[67]

Dudek's remarks here are reminiscent of those of Leo Kennedy during the Thirties when in "Direction For Canadian Poets" (see Chapter II, p.53) he asked that Canadian poets leave their ivory towers and join the life of the masses so that their poetry might become more socially relevant. The First Statement critics shared this belief with regard to the Preview group and the attitude toward poetry they represented. They felt that although modern poetry must necessarily be social poetry, the social theme should not appear to be imposed upon it by writers who felt it their duty to advocate

a cause. The same was true of political content. For the First Statement writers the political element in poetry must be a natural by-product of the social theme and implicit in the treatment of the subject. Neither of these characteristics, however, could in their view be achieved by writers who were out of contact with the social condition of the average man.

Although the occasional piece of political analysis was published in First Statement,[68] there is no evidence whatsoever of the kind of editorials that Anderson wrote for Preview outlining the role of the poet in wartime. Sutherland, Layton, and more moderately Dudek, were all Marxists but the magazine was seldom used as a vehicle for their political ideas. Audrey Aikman saw a parallel between the political attitudes of Raymond Souster and John Sutherland at the time, explaining that "they were, for instance, both socially conscious primarily from an humanitarian and not a political point of view."[69] Sutherland himself illustrates in First Statement of August 1944 that his interest at this time was in the individual rather than in political action and that the most significant criterion of poetic judgement lies in the poem's expression of human nature rather than in its political statement:

> Against this background of social chaos, of which the war is only the violent and morbid symptom, such social pressure is reflected in the cry for social function in art- "social consciousness" . . . the political context of the work of poetry or prose is of course a fascinating study. That aspect is important in the understanding and appreciation of any contemporary writing. But the final criterion of judgement is still the standard of art itself- good taste, which derives

its authority from a long tradition and from a sense of what is significant and close to human nature. This, and nothing else, decides whether "social significance" will be artistically valid or not.[70]

Although Sutherland's socialism became increasingly political (to the extent that he approached Anderson in 1945 about making the proposed Northern Review an organ of the Labor Progressive party)[71] at this time his remarks seem extremely rational and moderate compared to Anderson's frequent diatribes.

Of the First Statement writers, Irving Layton was the most radical politically and poetically. The poetry, stories, social comment, and literary criticism that he published in the magazine all reflect his desire to associate himself with the "proletariat" in much the same manner advocated by Dudek. In order to write poetry which was representative of the average man, the poet himself had to be an average man rather than a bourgeois intellectual, an academic, or a literary dilettante and this was generally the pose that the First Statement writers adopted. Pose is the proper word in this regard because it suggests a common attitude toward art and the artist rather than an actual description of the social status of the writers. In fact, Layton was completing his Masters degree, Dudek was working in an advertising office and would soon pursue graduate studies at Columbia, and Sutherland, while certainly not well off, was undoubtedly a middle-class intellectual. In their attempt to associate themselves and their poetry with the simplicity and honest reality of the working man, they were in effect advocating a

new romanticism - a romanticism which implied a return to simplicity of expression and echoed the Wordsworthian premise of identifying with "common humanity." Layton suggested that a similar romantic movement was evident in contemporary English poetry in the writing of Alan Rook, Henry Treece, and H. R. Rogers who were in reaction to the "triumvirate of Auden, Spender, and Lewis which had dominated poetry of the thirties."[72] Although the new poets continue to believe in the social function of poetry they show a difference in mood and emphasis: "For the doctrinaire Marxism of the 30's they have substituted a willingness to observe and experiment; for metaphysics, science; for rationalism, empiricism; and for a narrow dogmatism, a naive skepticism."[73] Layton's principle emphasis, however, is upon the source of the new poetry and the poets' willingness to accept their society rather than criticise it:

> The new poetry is being created in the factory, in the mine, or at the battlefront. "Soldier poet" has ceased to have the faintly romantic tinge it had in the last war. There are too many of them . . . Where the older generation of poets was hostile to their society and rejected it, this generation derives its main vigor from an identification with it . . . Clearness and intelligibility have been restored to English poetry.[74]

Whether or not Layton's assessment of the literary situation in England is correct, it is clear that the First Statement writers wanted to see themselves as representative of similar poetic ideals in Canada and their opposition to the Preview poetic becomes somewhat more understandable in this context. Layton admires in the younger English poets the same qualities that Dudek appreciated in Sandburg and the American social

realists. These were qualities which Anderson and Preview shared in theory but failed to implement in practice because of their affinity for metaphysical complexity and their interest in the examples of Auden, Spender, and Thomas. This, in Sutherland's terms, meant that they had failed to fulfill the chief duty of the Canadian writer which was "to secure a responsive audience in this country."[75]

This difference between the First Statement poetic and that of Preview led A. J. M. Smith, in his introduction to The Book Of Canadian Poetry, to classify the "two schools" in terms of "native" and "cosmopolitan" traditions. Sutherland considered the distinction "a valuable one"[76] but disagreed with Smith's definition of the characteristics of the two traditions. Smith predicted that the cosmopolitan poets were more likely to be of significant influence on future Canadian poetry because of their "heroic effort to transcend colonialism by entering into the universal, civilizing culture of ideas."[77] Sutherland took issue with this assessment because Smith had praised the work of those writers that he and First Statement condemned as being regressive and ineffective. In Sutherland's words: "he [Smith] fails to understand that a poet preaching politics in the guise of Auden may be just as colonial as a member of the C.A.A. praising Britain in metres of Tennyson, so he fails to see what Canadian poetry of the future might be."[78] Sutherland believed correctly that the poets of the "native," or North American tradition would have a greater influence on Canadian poetry in

the future but it is interesting to note that he refrains from citing the First Statement writers among his examples of those providing evidence of this. Dudek, Layton, and Souster would not be specifically mentioned until Sutherland's more formal counter manifesto in his introduction to Other Canadians. At this time he refers to established poets such as Knister, Ross, Pratt, Livesay and Marriott. Eli Mandel, in reference to Sutherland's remarks in Other Canadians, has recently pointed out that he:

> . . . simply identified "cosmopolitan" with British poetry and consequently with social reaction: "Our poetry is colonial because it is the product of a cultivated English group who are out of touch with a people who long ago began adjusting themselves to life on this continent." Non-colonial then implies North American, radical, proletarian, the "Brooklyn-bum self" who is the real Canadian self.[79]

The truth of this observation is evident from the critical articles and editorials which appeared in First Statement and the arguments that Sutherland brought against Smith serve to emphasize the different attitudes toward the role of the poet and the function of poetry that the two magazines represented. Smith's introduction seems to have clarified the opposition in Sutherland's mind and Mandel's understanding that: "In part, the issue between Smith and Sutherland is modernism; in part, it is the social function of poetry and literature,"[80] can be seen as a statement of the issues between First Statement and Preview as well.

Sutherland's willingness to print the Preview writers diminished as First Statement continued to be published. In the early issues he accepted a surprisingly large number of

their poems but most appeared before Layton, Dudek, and Souster began to contribute regularly. Page published the last of six poems in First Statement I,7; Anderson had three in the first seven issues and one in II,12; Klein published six poems in all including three lengthy sections of The Hitleriad, and others contributed intermittently: Shaw (1), Alice Eedy (2), James Wreford (3). After Layton appeared for the first time in I,9, however, he along with Dudek and Souster contributed by far the largest majority of work both in prose and verse. Layton published twenty poems and several short stories in all. Dudek, who first appeared in I,10, had a total of twenty-six poems printed; and Raymond Souster's contribution included thirteen poems and a short story after he first appeared in I,11. Miriam Waddington, whose work was received favorably by both magazines, published eleven poems in First Statement. Since Layton, Dudek, and Souster were the most frequent contributors and since all had an interest in the policy of the magazine (Layton and Dudek as editors and Souster sharing their critical attitudes as editor of Direction) a study of their work can provide an understanding of the manner in which the critical principles of the magazine were embodied in its poetry.

The first poems that Layton published do not portend the variety and boldness which characterizes much of his later First Statement writing. "House To Let," "Accept This Day," and "Jewish Rabbi," appeared in First Statement 1,9 and all affirm the possibility of existence in a world which

has become chaotic. "House To Let" suggests that keeping busy by building a "house against these unseasonable times,- / The puffy, leering lips of old women, / The unanswerable protest of a hungry child. / The nakedness of men before the great terror" may be one means of defence against the painful social realities with which everyone must live. By isolating the self from the evidence of confusion it is possible to hope that "the sun will look different tomorrow." Another way of leading a meaningful life in a universe without meaning is offered in "Accept This Day." Here the poet suggests that men "Accept this day and set it quite apart / From other days; give to your heart / The music and measure of its beat." The beauty of the natural world is constant even if society is not. This can be accepted by men who are unafraid of their mortality and "laugh to know that laughter ends." Such a man is described in "A Jewish Rabbi." He is one whose strong faith allows him to leave behind "the dross, the cold, the hates of men." By looking within himself and at the history of the survival of "Israel's breed," the Rabbi is able to see beyond the petty problems which beset society and find meaning in his own more universal truths. These rather slight poems then, all offer affirmative solutions to the problem of living in a negative environment. In other instances Layton is not so optimistic.

"1943" (FS II,2), for example, views man's hopes for the future as "symmetric hopes snug / As a commodity on a grocer's shelf." They are pre-packaged and automatically

conceived in terms of "the tramcar's logic." The real "fears and irresolutions" which lie beneath the confident facade, however, arise "like flies thickening, dying / On cold, autumnal windowsills" when they are least expected and force men to observe with trepidation "The shapes of our fearsome decisions." This theme is carried through with cynical bitterness in "Forecast" (FS II,1) which suggests that "savage, disastrous" rumours be left "To the seer alone." Unlike the average man who is"astigmatic" with regard to the present as well as the future, the visionary is capable of seeing:

> In all our indifferent glory
> An old, disfigured story
> Where the surest backward grope
> From rotted moorings hurled,
> Tumbled and thrown
> Upon a beggared Europe
> A begarred, buried world.

This is the unfortunate truth regarding man's condition. He has not shown evidence of spiritual or moral progress in the past and he shows no signs of it in the present. The future, therefore, holds little promise of improvement. It is this view of the universe which leads Layton in "Providence" (FS I,12) to see man's efforts to build a progressive, modern technological society as a "show before a comic mirror / Wherein atoms become skyscrapers, / The fool's tower flung to the skies / . . . even a miniscule capers / And the meanest pauper a prince dies." When compared to the cosmic order man's efforts are comically insignificant. The tragedy, however, is that for the most part, men who build their lives "with careful fragments," live and die without understanding

the true dimensions of their accomplishments.

This pessimistic, "hard-boiled" attitude suggests that as a poet Layton did not find it easy to base his work upon an acceptance of society. Artistic integrity demanded that evil, injustice, and human fallibility be explored in his poetry as well. However Layton seldom deals with specific social and political problems which would lend themselves to open didacticism or propaganda. This he avoids by constantly attempting to make his statements universal rather than particular. Even in his early poems the tendency to transfigure rather than simply describe experience is evident. The war poems which appeared in First Statement are good examples of his method.

In "April" (FS II,8)[81] the "annual passion" of spring returning to Montreal is contrasted to the condition of the people on whom it descends: "Humans rancid beside sweet-smelling / Trees sprawl between the thorns / While Mount Royal slopes / Its green arms under their arses." The return of spring on the one hand suggests vitality, rebirth, and passion but this traditional, archetypal significance is lost upon a world inhabited by loafers and one-armed beggars for whom "There were no Shebas, not even Jills." Having had no romantic ideals on which to base their hopes for the future, life and the return of April have become routine and stagnant for them. The second stanza carries this theme over to the war itself. There is a cinematic cut to "the base hospital behind the lines / [where] Ideologies are carried

out in bedpans." The value systems for which men fight have become as meaningless for the victims of the war as spring has become for the social derelicts at home. The speaker in the poem associates himself with this loss of faith in the possibility of rebirth and passionate vitality by grimly suggesting that "Christ in a fox-hole / Cannot save my soul." Thus, the poem becomes a universal statement of the tragic condition of contemporary man suffering from a debilitating social malaise, one symptom of which is blind affinity for war.

Such a world must necessarily be dehumanizing and chaotic and it is this theme which is the subject of "Words Without Music" (FS II,10). Here the setting is a train inhabited by soldiers and business men all of whom are seen as having been dehumanized by their social environment. The soldiers are "ignorant soldiers / Believing that when forever the violent die / The good receive their inexhaustible cow: / Grade seven and Superman have arranged everything." The other passengers are described as "unimportant liars, / Salesmen, admen, the commercial trivia / Blown between the lines of memoranda." This time, however, the speaker blames them for their ignorance of the more important values in life and sees them as philistines. They represent the simplistic, dishonest approach to reality which makes life easy and meaningless. Thus they do not see the natural world outside the train as "firelands." Instead they remain "cold excursionists" who travel obliviously through reality, their "throats buttoned

up / With yellow timetables." For Layton such a condition is an absurd nightmare where, brutally, "the goats leap into our faces shrieking."

Two other poems, "Obstacle Course" (FS I,12) and "Petawawa" (FS II,4) deal with absurdity differently. Here it is equated with the military ritual of basic training. In both poems Layton is concerned with the inability of the recruit to associate the training situation with the actual purpose for which he is being trained. Negotiating the obstacle course is part of the training which will enable him to survive and fulfill his role as killer. War enables men to live without blame and thus makes killing itself a form of sport. Thus the poet warns us to "Beware when grown-ups play a child's game." Being unaware of the real meaning of death is also the subject of "Petawawa." The recruits, like those in "Words Without Music," have had their minds formed "Decently correct by press barons" as well as Hollywood and the "comic supplement." Modern media, advertising, and entertainment have rendered them incapable of understanding the reality of their situation and so they "fumble" with "the meanings of historical death" rather than with the actual possibility that they will have to kill or be killed.

These poems all view man as a victim of his social environment and his involvement in the war is only another instance of his being drawn into inhuman activity by a dehumanizing society. The technology of the media, as well as war itself, functions to distort modern man's awareness of the

true issues which are at stake in his life. The war poems, then, tend to deal with man's confusion in a generally "sick" society. Rather than making specific references to particular problems, Layton strives for a universal statement of the debasement of human values by understanding man as a victim of social forces which have undermined his consciousness.

In other poems Layton shows that he as a man has not become such a victim by devoting his attention to the beauty of nature rather than the ugliness of society. "Day," which appeared in First Statement I,12, employs the violent image of dawn as murderer of the night in order to give dramatic impact to a commonplace subject:

> The jealous dawn annuls each star
> With his silver cane,
> Nor will he take the earth to wife
> Until the moon is slain.
>
> Yet so ancient malison
> Is acknowledged here,
> For where the moon was cruelly stabbed
> A red stain will appear.

"Vigil," which was printed in the same issue, is also an impressionistic tribute to the consistency of nature's ritualistic transformation of evening into day. In this poem, Dawn is "A crayon held in a master's fingers / Pencilling in soft outlines the earth" while Day is described in terms of "suns that turn the wayside streams / To moving panes of light." These objective appreciations of natural phenomena are synthesized with humanity in "The Swimmer" (FS II,10) which was later included with "Petawawa," "Words Without Music," "April" (as "Returning with an Annual Passion"),

and "De Bullion Street" in Other Canadians. The swimmer is identified with the sea water that surrounds him. The poet understands the sea both as an element in which the swimmer is at home and as a reminder of the primitive environment from which man first innocently evolved only to metaphorically return once he became civilized and capable of sin. The swimmer is variously described as "a brown weed with marvellous bulbs," "a thief" whose "blood sings to the tiger shadows," and "a male salmon." Primitive instincts remain part of his nature when he is in the sea. They well to the surface and motivate him. But in the last stanza, lying on the beach looking out at the ocean from which he has emerged, the swimmer is "Stunned by the memory of lost gills." Natural evolution and social civility have usurped his primitive innocence so that he now "Observes with instigated eyes / the sun that empties itself upon the water" (my italics). As a man he can no longer be as spontaneously free as he once was and he is, in some ways, a less adequate being who is more "at home" on "the skull-like beach" than in the "gonad sea." Thus, "The Swimmer" becomes Layton's metaphor for all men whose lives are defined by the tension between the limitations of the primitive and civilized aspects of their nature.

Either by objective observation or by associating human situations directly with natural phenomena, Layton's First Statement poetry bears out Sutherland's interest in him as a nature poet. Even in "We Have Taken The Night," (FS II,6) which is the only sensuous love poem he published

in the magazine, Layton describes his lover in natural imagery sensing that "Dark rivers flow under your hair" and feeling "the cool rain-bark of your trunk." But the poems which best differentiate Layton and First Statement from the Preview poetic are those which deal realistically with the urban social environment. Poems like "Say It Again Brother," "De Bullion Street," "Upper Water Street," "Gonorrhea Racetrack," and "Gent's Furnishings" define the "native tradition" as Sutherland understood it better than the nature poetry because they represent a genuine attempt on the part of the poet to identify himself with North American "proletarian" man. It is in these poems that Layton assumes the persona that Dudek admired in Sandburg's "tendency to pick up poems on street corners." They are poems meant to counteract the timid, genteel respectability that the First Statement writers associated with Preview and the Auden-Spender "cosmopolitan" tradition. Layton satirized it in "The Modern Poet" which appeared in First Statement I,16:

> Since Auden set the fashion,
> Our poets grow tame;
> They are quite without passion,
> They live without blame.
> Like a respectable dame.
>
> Bountiful lady, good Sir,
> In search of a pet?
> Would you consider
> A modern poet?
> He's for purchase or to let.
>
> His pedigree? Uncertain
> But, come now agree.
> He's the one to entertain
> Your guests at a tea.
> A wit and a scholar is he.

Poets are shocking, you say?
Villon, Baudelaire-
Ho! They come gentler today,
Their language most fair . . .
Ah-ha, you'll order a pair?

The proletarian "social-realist" poems are attempts to interpret the necessary voice of Villon and Baudelaire in Canadian terms: the "Brooklyn-bum self" so appreciated by Sutherland. When compared to Layton's other poems, the language of "Say It Again Brother" (FS I,19) is extremely colloquial: "'twon't be the geezer in the silk hat / who'll turn the job for us: he's dumb. / He couldn't feed a starvin' cat." Besides the language, however, the poem also fulfills the First Statement desire to identify with men rather than political ideals or academic arguments of university professors. Apostrophizing the average man and assuring him that the future depends on "guys like you, / quick on the trigger, smart as hell / and a special piece of heart inside them too." In "Gent's Furnishings" (FS II,3) the speaker is a clothing salesman who is gloriously surrounded by the activity and emotions of Ste. Catherine Street. His job requires that he be "re-assuring, friendly, know all the answers" but faced with the variety of truths by which the urban community lives, he cannot answer the final question: "Does truth unite or divide?" "Gonorrhea Racetrack" (FS I,20) whimsically recognizes that the more sordid aspects of society should not be ignored. The "vermin" who inhabit the lower depths of society think it "Outrageous that no one remembers us, / Even tho' the townsfolk / Grow prosperous."

Layton's most ambitious attempts to express his acceptance of social reality are shown in "Upper Water Street" (FS I,20), and "De Bullion Street" (FS II,5). In these poems the streets have personalities and a grotesquely beautiful character of their own. "De Bullion Street" is inhabited by whores, orientals and skipjacks and its lanes stink of garbage, but its vulgarity suggests a vitality and a primitive honesty which is lacking in other more respectable neighbourhoods. The street becomes a living symbol of the freedom associated with the uninhibited exercise of the basic and carnal aspects of human nature. Layton has more love for what De Bullion Street represents than for the inhibited respectability of "the virgin at the barricaded door" and he realizes that by denying themselves the full expression of their humanity, the timid virgins of the world who cannot accept the values of the street are refusing to live their lives completely. He also knows that they are hypocritical because of their secret desire for sensual experience. Thus De Bullion Street, though a scaly serpent, tempts them with a "tongue-kiss like a butterfly."

The slums of "Upper Water Street" are given similar recognition. In this poem the fog is personified as an ugly, debauched woman who is as much a part of the neighbourhood as the actual people living there. She "spreads her grey belly / over the yellow tramcars / brushes past, on silent feet / shabby Paint and Hardware stores, / or flattens her wan face against illuminated shop windows." The poet sees the fog, as

he sees the neighborhood, without delusions that all things have to be socially acceptable in order to be worthwhile. Thus, Layton's First Statement poems generally embody his critical opposition to the cult of genteel respectability which tends to separate art from the average man. At times he gives the impression that he is willing to go to any lengths with language and imagery in order to shock his readers into responding to his poetic statements. His frank irreverence for the status quo is parallelled by his antagonism toward literary obliqueness and timidity fostered by Anderson and the Preview group among others. Sutherland's belief that one of the chief functions of poetry should be to create a responsive audience was carried out best among the First Statement writers by Irving Layton. His first poems appeared in the ninth issue and by the sixteenth, he had already come under critical attack from Patrick Waddington who complained of his ebullient egotism.[62]

Louis Dudek's poems did not receive the kind of response that Layton's occasionally succeeded in generating. Generally they reveal a less passionate attitude toward life and a more intimate preoccupation with the subjective domain of the poet than with the objective world which surrounds him. Dudek's "Berger Street" (FS I,11) for example, appears bland and commonplace when compared to Layton's boldly delineated "De Bullion Street" or "Upper Water Street." His language and inspiration are more reminiscent of Souster than of Layton:

> A guy I know was picked up here
> And put in the clink,

The rent costing him a week of his pay
Which went to the city's gold-box-
And all because he was "loitering
Along the Boulevard of Dreams!"
Hm! Pity they locked the fellow in
For doing nothing-no great sin-
While the business hummed, as one might say,
Better than on Christmas Day.

Aside from the fact that business is usually at a standstill on Christmas Day, the language and the subject matter of the poem leave the impression that the poet is attempting to write with the proletarian verity of Sandburg, but in actuality is out of his natural metier. His compassion for the innocent victim seems forced and unconvincing as does his conclusion which is really a direct prose statement of his liberal attitude toward brothels: "Man! If I had my way, / I'd put up parlours in Dominion Square Building / So's people could do things decent!" Dudek betrays his inability to honestly identify with the average man in this poem and thus provides an insight into his shortcomings as a proletarian poet. Unlike the early Layton or Sandburg, whom Dudek especially admired, he is essentially an introspective writer concerned with expressing his own emotional experience and philosophical attitude rather than with recording and identifying with the experience of others. Frequently, as in "Poem" (FS I,1), the poetry is entirely reduced to explicit statement and becomes a prose expression of his beliefs. Here, his dismay that Whitman has been excluded from the 65,000 poems which comprise the anthology Best Loved Poems Of The American People, results in the following:

But you weren't in it, Walt Whitman,

You- America singing!
You- the whole of the United States standing on two
legs and singing!
You weren't counted in.
They did not think you were worth the trouble including.

Although Dudek recognizes the foolish irony of the fact that Whitman is avoided by "respectable" editors, there is nothing poetic in his technique of expression. As John Frederick Nims remarked in his review of Dudek's contribution to Unit Of 5:[83] "He writes smoothly . . . But for the most part his diction is too flat and makeshift . . . he gives the impression of accepting too easily the first words that come to mind . . . The poetry is still in Dudek's mind."[84] This criticism is often justified in the work that Dudek published in First Statement. His early poetry is frequently either too explicit or too obscure and, as a whole, it lacks a unifying view of the world.

There are poems, however, which transcend his average artistic achievements. "O Contemporaries" which appeared in First Statement II,11, is far superior to the poems already cited. In this poem his voice is natural and he does not give the impression that he is assuming a predetermined social or literary pose. Rather, the poem deals with larger more universal questions regarding the meaning of the present and the potential that man may realize in the future. The confusion and decadence of the contemporary world which exists "In a cloud of time . . . Involved with Stalins, Churchills, and chorus girl's legs," needs a "Gulliver"- a messiah who will be able to explain it. The poet first suggests that

although any man theoretically has the power to "make our intelligence like the cricket sing," in practice he usually fails because his knowledge is lost in "the clatter / Of caricatures, a Hitler circus, jitterbugging kids." Even though the average man may be potentially wise, his wisdom cannot be articulated because of the overwhelming complexity of the modern world. The suggestion then is made that scientists and historians may be able to provide an explanation. They too, however, fail because their ability to tell "of time's serpent, / Of man in his naked skin, who is vulture and fish / And cell in a slide" avoids the larger more important issues such as:

> What dimensions of space he sleeps in, what times
> He sweeps as he multiplies, what gods he gives joy to;
> Nor what is this storm-blind moment that we dread
> What this unsteady stone in space on which we cross.

In the final analysis, man, his present direction, and his future potential, remain an enigma which humanity must forever attempt to penetrate. Implicit in the poem is the possibility that in his continual and endless drive toward understanding, man is fulfilling his tendency toward complete knowledge. The confusion of the modern world indicates both how little he has learned and how his destiny points toward ultimate failure in the quest for Godhood. Thus, "O Contemporaries," like other of his better poems, shows Dudek is closer to being an intellectual and a philosopher than a "Brooklyn-bum" proletarian poet of Sandburg's type. This same is true of "Garcia Lorca" (FS II,9) in which he chooses the poet's death as the objective correlative for a universal statement

about the nature of human society:

> Each man's struggle against the pack
> is the futile and dispersed class war. Could we but
> concentrate the violence, press out the pus
> in one shock! But we make
> a nest for germs, saving our inch of skin
> a home for killers paid by generous bankers
> ready to belt on their holsters and say, "I am the law."
>
> So it grows to insanity, the furious stars
> in our ears ringing, the poet's roses
> ripped and scattered apart, as Federico
> Garcia Lorca was shot that morning,
> an agile songster dropped in the damp grass.

Dudek is motivated by the same sense of social and political injustice that inspired Layton, Sutherland, Anderson, Page and other poets of the Forties but in terms of the First Statement poetic, he is better when he is speaking about proletarian man than when he is trying to speak as a proletarian.

In keeping with this, Dudek's least successful poems are those in which he attempts to deal directly with the social injustice around him. "Offices" (FS I,10) describes the condition of office workers who have become mesmerized by boredom and noise. The routine, unrewarding work they perform has even rendered them incapable of gaining relief through imaginative fancy. Just as there is no room for imagination in an efficient office, there is no room for it in office workers who have become "Happy in a ventilated room." Dudek gives the impression that he is more critical of the workers who are victims of the office routine than of the business world itself.

In "The People Like It" (FS I,15), he continues his

criticism of the gullible average man by seeing the typical person as a consumer who will accept anything that is offered. The lunch counters "feed them anything," the radio stations "feed them crap," and the same is true of newspapers, governments and the Church. Dudek's only concession is that sometimes the institutions "are best intentioned, they have nothing better to give," but he is most concerned with shocking people out of their complacent attitude than with exposing the causes behind it. In "Coal Shortage" (FS I,15), on the other hand, there is no doubt about the cause of the people's dejection since he tells us twice in the twelve-line poem that the coal shortage has been "brought on by the war."

Two other poems make their social comment in a more indirect manner. In "On A Bridge At Pt. St. Charles" (FS I,19) the speaker's vantage point reminds him of "Venice and the Bridge of Sighs." He imagines that he is actually looking at the romantic Venetian cityscape but by associating the polluted river below him with the imaginary "Grand Canal" he remembers that it too is a "Grand Canal of sewers." From here the poem is built upon the contrast between the beauty of appearance and the ugliness of reality. His wish to idealize the view before him is constantly thwarted by the reality which cannot be escaped: "Let me lean here and breathe / Fantastic air, / Under buildings where blue ducts / Flow, and rats glide in gondolas, unskimmed / Rivers reek, of beetle skin." Regardless of his efforts, he cannot maintain a purely

romantic view of the world and finally he is led to the conclusion that the pollution and corruption in America is "the true germ / Of a European renascence."

"We walk about the streets and miss death" (FS I,19) is based upon the assumption that although death is never far away in an urban society, its acceptance is too often avoided. The speaker takes the view that it is important to "know him" because an awareness of death gives a much more profound meaning to life. The two lovers in the poem have often almost lost sight of their mortality but as they kiss "in the dim night . . . looking at each other's face, the stray hair / Hanging down, the eyes / Almost closed, and the lips not red," they are reminded of the meaning of their existence and they are led to think about the more serious aspects of life rather than continuing to "play, and play, and play." These poems show that Dudek is essentially not a social realist poet at this point in his career. He is concerned with social issues but he lacks the direct, frank colloquialism of Layton and Souster. When he does attempt to use common language and subject matter the poems often become flat prose-like expressions of the obvious. Despite the occasional exceptional poem, like many apprentice poets Dudek is more interested in himself than in others. This is also true of the love poems he published in the magazine.

"Distraction" (FS II,3) is again based upon the tension that exists between the real and the ideal. The speaker is distracted from his thoughts of ideal love by an "explosion

from a piston." The real, urban world has suddenly intruded and reduced his vision of his lover to mere physicality and he wonders "How can I ever love you now / With the same old love? / How can I take from merest sex / From any vision of your breasts?". In "Snowdrops glistened in your hair" (FS I,12) the poet is likewise concerned with his own feeling that "black night walked out of me, / And shining day, unlock'd broke free," when he kissed his love with snowdrops in her hair. Another equally slight poem is "Sonnet" (FS II,8). Here the speaker is concerned with his emotional state when his lover departs. Rather metaphysically he compares himself and his lover to mirrors which reflect flashes of light to one another over wide distances. Even when he is "in the cold, distant sunless quarters" he is still joined to "the streak of you, distant as in a mirror." "Narrative," which appeared in the same issue, is a more complex love poem in which the speaker looks through his lover's eyes into a "realer dream . . . an actual future." The future that he sees is a vision of: "Boys in a green field, their change and motion, / Trees and warming wind, and hectic light, / Voices and shouts in the horizontal sunlight." The pastoral happiness and freedom of the boys is real only because "The ache to make them real is real" and once the lovers have transcended their own physical world they know that they cannot "live or love the same again." The lovers in the poem are striving to make their physical world more actual than it is by making it include their dreams and aspirations. The

poem functions as a statement of the importance of the inner life of the imagination in making the exterior, physical world more complete. The natural pastoral imagery in which the ideal world is described is parallelled in Dudek's nature lyrics which attempt to affirm the pleasure of life through a simple and sincere response to the beauty of the poet's natural environment. A few years later, Dudek explained his attitude toward this type of poetry in Contemporary Verse:

> I am trying to give as purely as possible the experience which is pure and isolated in my mind, and which is the imaginative image of the poem . . . But it is impossible, of course, to reproduce exactly in words or sounds what occurs within. The miracle of art is just this: how paint, stone, rasping on cat-gut, words made by the mouth, can contain feeling, desire, wisdom.[85]

Thus the emphasis in the nature poems is not only upon description but also upon an artistic recreation of the poet's inner feelings. His attempt is to render in words the emotions which attach to perception. "In Praise Of Sunrise" (FS I,12) is a poem which attempts to accomplish this through the creation of a mood. By repeating words and phrases an incantatory rhythm is created which transforms his praise of sunrise into a soft, peaceful chant: "Drop, drop delicate pearl in water, / Drop, delicate dancing pearl, / Drop in sea of white water, chase dark-of-sunset, pearl." The peacefulness and rebirth associated with sunrise is contrasted to the bolder splendor of sunset which suggests finality and termination in a similarly incantatory manner: "I have seen suns set enough, enough. / I have seen suns set enough; / Heard idol sunset heathen-praised enough." The sunrise, seen

as a goddess with which the poet can walk "hand-in-hand," is "delicate, silent and sweet-whispering," In this way Dudek draws attention to his own feelings about the positive symbolic significance of sunrise rather than to the beauty of it as an objective natural phenomenon. A beautiful little poem on the same subject which appeared untitled in First Statement I,10 provides an interesting contrast. Here, the poet is more concerned with objective description than with his emotional reaction to it. The difference in approach is easily recognized:

> Like a rich vein of purest gold
> Suddenly revealed
> To the light of day
> Is the rising sun;
>
> Like a precious vein cutting a streak
> In a rock-face of clouds
> Is the rising sun over the city,
> The city is wakening for work
> With grey and dusky eyelids;
> Washing herself in the light of the morning
> She looks long moments at the sun rising.

Dudek's other nature poems, however, all turn inward to reveal the subjective emotional state of the viewer. In "By Moonlight" (FS I,17) for example, the speaker, "Sitting in the branches / Of trees at midnight" equates the moonlight to heady liquor which is so intoxicating that he must "mingle it with the waters / Of separate stars" in order to "drink deep." "Sky" (FS I,17) begins with a direct statement of the association between the speaker's emotions and the sky: "It is surprising," he says, "how well the sky reflects me. / How much yearning there is in an evening sky." The evening sky

intensifies and corresponds to his own vague yearning "after some lost love / truth / or beauty" and the whole poem is intended as an expression of that indefinite state of anxiety. In two other untitled poems which appeared in I,12 and almost identical situation is employed. In one, the stars seen as "aching cold crystals," parallel the coldness that the viewer feels. He is "corpse cold" and as he closes his eyes to sleep, or to freeze to death: "all the stars wheel. / But one surgeon's needle / Piercing me, closes my frosty eyelids. / Icicled among the stars / I sleep." In the other poem the speaker looks "out of the silence of dark days" into an equally black sky which reminds him of his own feelings of desolation. Thus, he wishes that the black sky, like "the scratchboard dark days' dreams" could disappear leaving only the remote "spicule-pointed stars" to remind him of "celestial wars" rather than the anguish of earthly ones.

These poems are a further indication of Dudek's preoccupation with his own sensations. He is essentially introspective and his stated wish to express "the experience which is pure and isolated in my mind" is best fulfilled in these nature lyrics. As might be expected, this subjective approach to reality often leads him towards philosophy. He published seven poems in the magazine which can very loosely be called philosophic. In these poems Dudek's craftsmanship is often marred by vague thinking, confused imagery, or esoteric subject matter. An example of this is an untitled poem from First Statement I,12 which reads as follows:

There you sit
with your toothpick
and your pain
spun out of pure brain.

Call it what you like
wrestling with God
Growing figs on Aaron's rod
it's all the same
what's in a name
there's nothing to it
you think yourself into it.
Sit there
spinning a pink shell
round your nervicular hell.

Presumably the poem is meant to illuminate some negative aspects of an introverted personality, but it is much too cryptic to be sensible to anyone but the writer himself. This same is true, to a lesser extent, of "A White Paper" (FS II,1). Here the flight of a butterfly is observed in such a way that it is transformed into a record of the viewer: "a print / traced with my eye one afternoon." Exactly how the butterfly becomes a personal artifact is not clear except in terms of his retention of it in his memory. But the observer goes further than this by equating the butterfly with other museum pieces he has seen such as "the delicate ribs / and bones of a dancer who died in the sea." He suggests that he also sees the butterfly, which is "today's museum piece," as a water creature which plays "among corals / in a green sea, / dancing among sunbeams, / running from a shadow." His final hope is that "sometime hence" the memory of the butterfly "may lift like a layer, and see / me, white in the sunlight." The imagery, though pleasant, is confused to such a degree that it is necessary to consider the possibi-

lity that Dudek is being deliberately obscure in order to mask his uncertain intentions. "The Mountains" (FS II,5) is a purely imaginative attempt to embody the tension and uncertainty of contemporary society and the hope for a better future in a fictional incident. The poet is walking through streets "among the rocks of time and weather" and he is surrounded by visual and auditory impressions of a military bivouac. The situation is meant to symbolize the ominous atmosphere of contemporary society. Associated with this military atmosphere is the freezing weather which causes the speaker's eyes to tear. Their position is "High in the mountains near the dividing line / Where it is the coldest, and the rocks are a parapet," but he knows that as soon as the hills are scaled, mankind will be able to "look down / Into bright greenery, valleys and rivers / Thinning into wheat-fields; and the cold air like water / Will flow from us." This is Dudek's only First Statement poem which deals directly with his views on the war and the future of society and it is characteristic of him that it should also be expressed through an imaginative vision rather than in terms of the "first-hand experience" he advocated in his criticism.

Another poem which offers a positive view of the future is "Fire" (FS I,17). Here Dudek impressionistically associates the power of fire to burn and consume with his own energy to "burn" with anger and hatred at evidence of falsehood. But although he and the fire burn violently for a short time, both will also soon die down once the "dry and

bitter / Fuel of wrong" is consumed. Thus the poet has confidence that hate, falsehood, and anger will not prevail as characteristics of humanity. In "The Truth Divine" (FS I, 17) Dudek observes that: "The truth divine cannot be told / Unless it's in you from the start / The bad poet smells a flower, / And the businessman a green dollar." His point is that truth cannot be learned. No matter what poets, businessmen, or the "intelligentsia" may do to articulate it, truth will remain hidden until "each poisoned root" feeding individual and social falsehood is killed. The results of intellectual and industrial corruption are described metaphorically in "I Have Seen The Robins Fall" (FS I,10). His vision here is of a total wasteland; a world in which the robins "fall / One by one, from the trees, their throats dry." The grass is dry as well and "bent / In the dry air" and the stones, like "all the poems that sang in my heart" have turned to "bitter salt." Death is also the subject of "Sprig of Fir" which appeared in First Statement II,8. The poem is a sonnet which encloses a sextet between two quatrains. In the first part the poet is reminded of the mystery of death when he sees a sprig of fir "frozen in snow / Every atom of it broken." In the sextet he expands his perception by generalizing the meaning of death with regard to modern man:

> So we come to the edge of life, to darkness,
> Having crossed a brief space, we near death.
> We have lived swift moments, the rest are swifter,
> And look-there is light, a gleam in darkness,
> That gives the lie to the sure and shallow-
> To a world of windows, parasols and pencils.

Although the "sure and shallow" of society find

convenient explanations for the significance of death, Dudek is more concerned with its mystery and he wishes to remain "a wild hunter after death's truths" rather than a blind follower of accepted beliefs. His concern with the mysteries of death in this poem parallels his concern with mystery in general. As a poet, Dudek is more attracted to the inscrutable aspects of human existence than to natural and social realities. Thus he is led to explore the mystery of his own emotions and the enigma of human consciousness rather than the physical problems of the individual in society. For this reason Dudek does not successfully embody his critical ideals in his poetry. Although much of his First Statement work is carefully constructed in terms of imagery and rhythm, he is too often guilty of the faults he frequently found in others. His tendency toward introspection and exotic images places him on the periphery of the social realist tradition he most admired and which best characterizes the First Statement poetic. The poet closest to this tradition among the principal First Statement writers is Raymond Souster.

Writing of Souster in 1959, Dudek makes some observations which distinguish his poetry from that of Layton. Without realizing it perhaps he is also distinguishing between Souster and himself:

> Souster is a much less ambitious poet than Layton. He is anything but intellectual or ideational. For him the modern formula seems to read: "Let thinking be. If everything is that bad—and it is—let's live!" He demonstrates the emotions of a humane, sympathetic social being, in the midst of social depravity, of political corruption and war, without any search for underlying ideas (cf. E. E. Cummings and William Carlos

> Williams in this respect). His method is intuitive, anti-intellectual, . . . fundamentally sensuous and emotional. Since he is a poet—mais il faut etre poete d'abord—the result is poetry of our time, free of illusion, of self deception, yet palpitating with life.[86]

Souster's First Statement poems indicate that Dudek's remarks here apply to his earlier writing just as well as to those poems he published during the Fifties. He is, for Dudek, the true modern Canadian proletarian poet.

In First Statement I,15 Souster published a poem titled "Pavillion" which is characteristic of the majority of his contributions to the magazine. The heat and confusion of the dance floor are contrasted to the freshness of the night outside the pavillion where "a breeze runs / Smelling of deep lake and pine branch." Unable to tolerate the oppressive atmosphere, the two lovers leave the dance during an intermission and "climb the wood road" into the forest where they can find refuge and a private retreat from chaos: "the loud lights, the chattering, / And our friends of the dance floor guzzling pop and tearing the skins of hotdogs." The simple language and ordinary subject matter are characteristic of Souster's poetry as is the theme of the deeper more meaningful reality which lies hidden beneath the veneer of social custom. In "Cover Up" (FS I,20) it is the vaudeville theatre which provides the poet with a cause to "wonder if all this cover-up can really hide or / only lull for a day, / life, without any makeup or saxophones to dance to, death, / too much for even a funny man to laugh off." "The Dragon" (FS II,11) depicts the reality of war and death as a beast

which one day emerges from its hiding place beneath the "dreamer's paradise" to surprise those who have been desperately trying to deny its existence. When it does appear, the dragon transforms the world into a place of darkness causing people to see their former existence as a "childish dream."

It is not only superficial social customs and meaningless human activity however, which deceive. In "Late March" (FS I,20), and in "Green, Wonderful Things" (FS II,1) it is the beauty of the natural world which attempts to coerce the poet into forgetting the ugly truths of human society. "Impossible to think of," he says in "Late March":

> to comprehend,
> the words, war, bombings, air-raid shelters,
> With the afternoon sun so glowing like spring
> And the day but cheerful noise of sparrows . . .
> And though I know the sun is a liar, an escapist,
> Who are you, O world, that the sun should favour this dunghill
> With light washed clean by skies shining like truth.

Souster's hatred of falsehood, war, and stupidity accounts for his disillusionment with the contemporary world. It is a disillusionment which is also evident in the poetry of Contemporary Verse and Preview as well. Writers who were attempting to make their poetry honestly representative of their society could not avoid its evils. "Late March" illustrates the poet's struggle to accept the world by reconciling the beautiful with the ugly. This struggle also provides the emotional tension in "Green, Wonderful Things." While it does not view the world as a "dunghill," the poem nevertheless warns that: "green wonderful things / Are

enemies never to be forgotten, snapping shutters over lazy minds, / And hiding too easily the sight and sound of blood."

Souster wrote most of his First Statement poems while in military service and it is not surprising that his writing is more directly concerned with war than that of the others. His longest First Statement poem is "End Of A Year" (FS I,13) and it best expresses his feelings of futility and hopelessness at being involved in what he considered to be the ultimate evil. The poem begins and ends with the image of light from a stove thrown upon the ceiling of the airforce barracks. A fly struggles in the reflection and it becomes Souster's metaphor for the whole of humanity:

> I watch the fly struggling on the ceiling
> The fly that has a shadow
> Cast on the pattern of light that glows upwards from the stove.
>
> How futile, how useless, fly
> You will never escape,
> There is no way out.

Unaware of his predicament, the fly will continue to struggle until death. Faced with this vision of life the speaker falls "off into sleep where there are dreams / Of happy faces and unscarred lives." A similar awareness of himself as a captive in a savage and absurd universe is expressed in "Go To Sleep, World" (FS II,10) which became the title poem of Souster's second collection. As the title implies, the poem is an expression of his wish that the world would assume for a while the peaceful sleep of his beloved: "Make them all sleep, world / Make your tiny men / Give up their dirty killing for the night / And lay them gently down . . . their arms are tired with

butchering." He knows the world too well, however, to hope that a complete end to the slaughter can be accomplished. All he desires is a reprieve so that "they may be strong / In the morning and the blood run plentifully."

Souster is not always concerned with the war and the corruption of human values. In other poems he shows a genuine capacity for the sensitive expression of love, sensuous emotion, and compassion for his fellow man. If the poems of disillusionment explain Dudek's assessment of him as a man "in the midst of social depravity, political corruption and war," these other poems reveal him as a "humane, sympathetic social being." "The Hunter" (FS I,11) shows Souster's tendency to involve himself in the guilt attached to the actions of others. Here he has been a member of the party out trapping groundhogs and, though he deplores the killing of the animals, he is the one who is carrying the victim "along by the tail . . . with the blood / Dripping out of his mouth a couple of drops at a time." A companion walks ahead carrying the gun in a "proud way" and he remembers "how you held it / Up to the hog caught in the trap and blew its head in." Recognizing that the potential to commit acts of violence exists within everyone, and particularly within him, he is led to "wonder what fate you have in store for me."

The wish for a more intimate and certain relationship with a lover is expressed in "Wild Night" (FS I,11). In this poem he proposes that they "meet somewhere in the cold-blowing tumbling night" and that there will be only the two of them

"inside the warm soft house / Of your fur coat." Their love and their physical comfort in one another, which are the only refuge against the storm, are reminiscent of Matthew Arnold's final attitude toward the world in "Dover Beach." Souster's last line: "And nothing else will do, nothing else will do," reinforces the symbolic significance of the importance of human love as a meaningful defence against a turbulent environment.

"The White Horse," which appeared in First Statement I,18, is the best expression of sexual desire which appeared in the magazine:

> I am jealous of the horse she rides on
> Steering him hotly down the roads of the farm
> Bareback, the white manacles
> Of her legs around him, the knees
> Pressed into the flesh . . . does she ever
> Fall into the deep mantles of his mane
> And rub her breasts, laughing like a little savage,
> Along his neck . . . Look at him,
> His huge body writhing with mingled
> Torture and pride.

Neither Dudek nor Layton achieved this degree of success in the direct and simple expression of an emotional state. There is no doubt, however, that this is the type of poetry that they, along with Sutherland, thought most honest in its inspiration and most in keeping with the critical principles of the magazine because of its accessibility to the average reader.

Frustrated sexual desire is also the subject of "The Second And Third Floor" (FS I,15). The beautiful but unassailable girl sleeps on the second floor "and the covers / Mould to the shape of her body, half a melon and half a tree"

while "the boy on the third floor . . . writhes in exquisite torture thinking of pleasures and delights / That wait for him at the bottom of the stairs." Like Layton's "virgin at the barricaded door" in "De Bullion Street," Souster's woman, who has only "the shapes of her fear which guard her well," is denying both herself and her potential suitor an experience which would improve their lives. By not living completely, they are really not living at all.

Souster's compassion for others is evident from the poems already discussed but there are two poems which show this quality best. In "The Hospital" (FS I,18), the speaker at first appears to be the patient who notices that "The smell here, subtly, is of death." Going to the open window he looks out upon the life of the teeming city. The cool air "beats the blood awake in [his] head" and he feels confident about his own vitality: "I know I am young and restless and my city is big and wonderful." Just as the reader is satisfied that such a positive outlook cannot mean that the patient is seriously ill, Souster dramatically inverts the direction of the poem in the last two lines: "Then I turn from the window and talk again to you / Or your eyes, that are slowly, slowly dying." Suddenly the poem becomes an expression of the enormity of what the dying friend and the speaker are losing. Souster's remorse for himself and compassion for his friend are thus expressed with considerable force but without sentimentality.

The poem which perhaps best embodies the First Statement

critical attitude and at the same time represents the qualities most characteristic of Souster's poetry is "The Mother" (FS II,4). It is simple and direct in its statement, ordinary in subject matter, social in theme, compassionate in tone, and easily understood by the average reader:

> Between the legs
> Of the sailors and whores
> The cat walks
> With swollen belly of kittens
>
> Be careful kitty,
> Their boots are sharp
> And they have not too much love
> For any but their own kind.

It was for the qualities exhibited in poems like this one that Souster later won Sutherland's praise in his introduction to Other Canadians:

> Most important of all, Souster's poetry becomes the embodiment of the common man, completing in poetic terms what the average Canadian thinks and feels. It is poetry on a high creative level which remains perfectly communicative and full of meaning for readers who have not succumbed to spiritual old age.[88]

Because of his belief that poetry should be accessible to the average, unsophisticated reader, Souster's contributions helped establish the character of First Statement. His work embodies the poetic ideals upon which the magazine was founded and provides the best examples of the kind of direct, honest social observation that Sutherland was asking for. Souster's First Statement poetry offers the first glimpse of him as a young writer who would continue to make his presence felt as modern Canadian poetry continued to develop. His editorship of magazines such as Direction, Contact, and Combustion, his establishment of Contact Press, and his

efforts to introduce contemporary American poetic ideas into Canada during the Fifties all provide proof that his contribution to the development of Canadian poetry cannot be underestimated.

The poetry of the First Statement writers differs from that of the Preview group in its language, treatment of subject, and familiarity of tone. It also lacks, for the most part, Preview's tendency toward metaphysical complexity and oblique phrasing. This is in keeping with the magazine's orientation toward North American social realism rather than the English "literary" tradition. Both magazines share similar political and social views but differ in their methods of artistic expression. They also share the belief that poetry should function as a means of heightening the average man's awareness of himself and his society and although neither publication reached a wide audience, First Statement seems to have made a more sincere attempt to fulfill this function in the poetry they published. Along with Contemporary Verse, the magazines also expressed a belief in the poet's duty to advance Canadian culture. Although First Statement was more enthusiastic in its literary nationalism, both placed significant emphasis upon the role of the poet as culture-bearer in an essentially artless society. The First Statement writers saw the ideal poet fulfilling this role by being a man of the people who talked about common social problems in ordinary language. The Preview group, on the other hand, saw him more as a literary artist who had the interests of the

working man at heart but was not willing to sacrifice literary sophistication on his behalf. On the whole, the First Statement writers are more successful in embodying their critical ideals in their poetry because their sincere interest in the plight of the individual in society outweighs their concern for politics, literary complexity, and social reform. Most generally, Layton, Souster, and Dudek express an anxiety with contemporary society and a genuine sympathy for those who are its victims. Their attempt also is to accept the world, and, although they are often disillusioned, their willingness to depict it without romance or idealism suggests that they are more concerned with understanding the present than with prophesying the future.

First Statement originally published the writers who were later to become influential leaders of the modern poetry movement in Canada and provided the first indication that the strongest poetic movement would be toward North Americanism and away from English cultural influences. Further evidence of this was shown in Direction, the magazine that Raymond Souster was editing from various R.C.A.F. bases in the Maritimes at the time his poetry was being published in First Statement.

iv Direction And Northern Review In The 1940's

On November 20, 1943 David Mullen, William Goldberg, and Raymond Souster published the first issue of Direction.

Unlike Preview or First Statement, the magazine was specifically a product of the war in that its editors were all R.C.A.F. airmen. Like First Statement, however, the editorial purpose of the magazine was to provide an outlet for avante garde social poetry in a society which was an unimaginative literary vacuum. As Souster makes clear in the editorial letter to the first issue, their intention was to shock: "This has to be a blast. It doesn't have to be logical or sensible . . . we must attack, attack and attack. Let us call the Mag the Attack or Sperm, anything that will shock the dull witted Canadian imagination out of its lethargy."[89] Their concern is the familiar one: that Canadian art, and poetry in particular, is being restricted by outworn traditions and institutions such as the C.A.A. from its natural course of development. Souster acknowledges the efforts of Contemporary Verse, Preview, and First Statement to publish progressive experimental writing but he is dissatisfied with their success:

> Contemporary Verse of Vancouver has published much good, but little fresh and vital poetry. Preview of Montreal serves us with a rehash of Spender, Auden and MacNeice brought up to date with a Canadian setting, and any future claim to fame it will make will rest upon the fact that it first published Patrick Anderson . . . First Statement, also of Montreal, has been the most experimental, and perhaps for that reason, the least successful. But its experimentation is healthy and it has less interest in names and more of literature than its contemporaries.[90]

Souster's favorable opinion of First Statement suggests the similarity between the attitudes of the two magazines toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet. This relationship is also borne out by the fact that Souster's poetry played such an important part in establishing

the character of First Statement. Besides their mutual interest in bringing experimental poetry to a wider public and stimulating the Canadian imagination, the two magazines also express a similar belief in the importance of American influences upon Canadian poetry. Whereas the First Statement writers admired Whitman, Masters, and Sandburg, Souster pays his debt to Henry Miller and Kenneth Patchen. Both magazines, most simply, represent a poetic search for immediate social relevance which manifested itself through realism. Souster appreciated Miller's angry, abandoned formlessness and his willingness to express all aspects of life without concern for social or moral taboos. From Miller, he says in Direction 2, "I learned to write about everything and anything in the world as we know it today, without worrying about censorship, slander or publication."[91] The motto which prefaced Direction I was a quotation from Miller, and Direction 7 was completely devoted to excerpts from Tropic Of Cancer. This undated issue, probably published in March of 1945, was titled "the Paris of Henry Miller" and marks the first publication of his work in Canada. Their selection of Miller's writing, however, suggests that the editors were reluctant to shock the public too much since they completely avoided descriptions and language which might be offensive. They were hesitant perhaps, because the people of Port Aux Basques had previously threatened suit against the magazine for publishing Goldberg's portrait of them in "The Village" and for John Avalon's "St. John's Woman" which appeared in Direction 3. It was following this incident

that the magazine began using the Outremont Quebec address of William Goldberg's parents.[92]

Souster admired Patchen's artistic integrity and, as with Miller, his refusal to compromise his beliefs for the sake of social and literary acceptance. His poetry, Souster says:

> . . . has been called formless, chaotic, and all the rest of those slick lieterary [sic] labels, but only occasionally rich and gushing like blood from the wound of a giant, seldom as quietly beautiful as snowflake falling, [sic] rarely savagely snarling as a tiger in the last jungle of the world; no, there has been too much of the other, too little of the truth.[93]

Souster also respects Patchen because he has not given up on the world. Besides his disillusionment "he has hope, he is able to look beyond a world of falling bombs . . . to a world where love is the bomb falling on the human heart."[94] The attributes of vitality, frankness, and honesty that Direction found admirable in these two American writers were the very qualities which Canadian poetry seemed to be lacking. The accepted Canadian literary norms are discussed by Souster in a letter entitled "the other side of the fence," which appeared in Direction 6. The letter was prompted by the rejection of a manuscript of poems he had submitted to a "well-known Canadian publishing house." The basis for their rejection was that Souster's poems were vital but unrestrained, frank but undisciplined. His anger at such restrictive criteria, which epitomized the timidity of the Canadian literary establishment, is vented as follows:

> I'm told that a lot of my poems could have gained almost unbelievable power by a use of "a little fine chiseling

restraint." O I love that. O I love the smallness, the perfect pettiness, the womanish touch of that phrase. Doesn't it describe Canadian poetry of the last fifty-years better than E. K. Brown's Medal Winner or the whole of A. J. M. Smith's tired, cumbersome anthology?[95]

Like First Statement, Direction was concerned with publishing avant garde poetry which honestly expressed the condition of the individual in contemporary society. Their aim was to reform Canadian poetry rather than Canadian society or politics. Direction 7 contains an editorial note which gives the first indication of Souster's increasing interest in literary internationalism as well. Where First Statement saw Canadian literature as a branch of North American literary culture, Direction presumed to have "eyes not only on Canada but on the rest of the world."[96]

Further evidence of their literary concern as well as their agreement with the critical principles of First Statement is indicated by the fact that the longest critical article published in Direction was Sutherland's "Great Things And Terrible,"[97] a witty and insightful criticism of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts. By indicating the negative poetic qualities that Roberts embodies, Sutherland clearly implies what the two magazines understood to be the qualities most important for the modern poet and his poetry. He begins by attacking the role of the poet that Roberts represented, describing him as an accepted Canadian institution whose pince-nez signify his importance as a national figure. It is this quality, according to Sutherland, which prevented him from "raising his writing up from the level of verse to that

of poetry." As Layton, Dudek, and Souster all had stated, the poet must be an unpretentious member of the working class in order to write with passion and significance. He must not, like Roberts, put poetry on a pedestal as a means of attaining personal grandeur. Sutherland also takes issue with Roberts' poetic technique and language, pointing out how he uses meaningless words for non-existent purposes and literary devices for oratorical rather than poetic reasons. In other words, he lacks clarity and precision and is therefore a dishonest writer. Roberts' understanding of the role of the poet as a fatal combination of professor and preacher had an adverse effect not only on his own work but also upon the Canadian public who had come to automatically associate this image with poets and poetry. Thus, the young modern poets felt it their duty to change the public's image of the poet which was still influenced by the Roberts tradition and to show that poetry could be vulgar, hard-hitting, and immediately relevant as well as beautiful. Significantly, the next issue of Direction contained a brief article by Souster entitled "The Forgotten Canadian: Raymond Knister." The ironic and tragic implication for Souster was that whereas the Canadian literary public remembered and revered the image of Roberts, they were completely unaware of Knister's more important contribution. Knister's rural upbringing and simple farm lyrics placed him in direct opposition to everything that Roberts represented. Although biographical and appreciative rather than critical, the article and the poems that accompanied it

stand as a statement of the poetic principles to which Direction was dedicated.

The poetry which was published in the magazine generally embodies its critical ideals very well. Although as a whole it is more prosaic than that published by First Statement, the fact that the two magazines share essentially the same poetic principles allows the work of one to be understood as representative of the other. This is also possible because Direction published many writers who were at the same time contributing to First Statement and even though Souster acknowledged the talent of Patrick Anderson, none of his poems nor any others by the Preview group appeared in the magazine. There is also the fact that the vast majority of the poems published were Souster's and since they were written during the same period and from the same point of view as those he contributed to First Statement, there is little to choose between them in terms of quality or inspiration. In all, Souster published forty-three poems in Direction as well as two prose-poems and several excerpts from projected novels. The other editors, William Goldberg and David Mullen, contributed nine and eight poems respectively. Poets associated with First Statement who appeared in Direction were: Irving Layton (3), Lois Darroch (2), Kay Smith (3), and Miriam Waddington (7).[98]

One formal difference between Souster's Direction poetry and that he published in First Statement is its tendency toward a longer line reminiscent of Kenneth Fearing who was

an early influence upon him.'" Several of his poems are as a whole more lengthy than either the First Statement poems or those written later in his career. "Three Poems For Audrey" (D 1) which is really a single poem, is forty-six lines while "Place Of Meeting" and "The Carousel Of Madness," both of which appeared in Direction 2 have forty-seven and fifty-three lines respectively. "When I Write About The Murder" (D 5) has fifty lines. Other than this difference Souster's poems are essentially the same in theme and style as those in First Statement and a detailed analysis of them provides no new insights into the relationship between his critical attitude and his art. It is interesting to note that a larger percentage of Souster's poems dealing directly with the subject of the war appeared in First Statement than in Direction. The co-editors, Goldberg and Mullen, also have between them only one poem in which the war plays a direct part. This indicates that although the magazine was in most respects a child of the war, it was not primarily interested in publishing war poetry.

Goldberg's poems especially, show a surprising acceptance and even love for society. This is often because he is looking back to more pleasant times or beyond the war into a better future, but the poems themselves deal with what he finds pleasant rather than with what is ugly. In "Lost Cities" (D 1) for example, as two people walk "the night through the dark road / With nothing to lighten the desolation but memories," the poet is reminded that he is "As much a part

of Montreal as one of its squares / And avenues." From here the poem grows into exultation regarding the Montreal he remembers and it is, despite the war, more real to him than any other experience:

> It belongs to my mother who gave birth to me.
> It explains my origin, my being, my relation
> To things. In the womb of my mother lay
> My beginnings, my first stirrings, my first light.
> Every single moment of any life is pain, joy
> Oh sorrow is like a bird pining for its nest.

Thus he concludes that "Memories are cities in which I dwell / Not like an adopted son or foreigner / But as one native born." He could just as well have written of the distance between him and these realities but Goldberg prefers to remember and express their nearness. This is Goldberg's best and most ambitious poem among those in Direction. Its confessional technique based upon a longing for self identity in an environment which is alien to him is characteristic of his other poems as well. All of them either take the reader into a fondly remembered world of the past or into a comforting world of the future to which he will return after the war is over. Goldberg always attempts to make his statements as personal and honest as possible thereby going beyond mere observation or social criticism. Most of the poems, however, are brief and somewhat superficial expressions of his own private state of mind.

"When I Come Home," (D 1) is a further example. Here he has both a memory and a hope of a love whom he shall watch "flowering as the apostle / Watches his master, as the mother her child." In "Letter To C.O." (D 1), which is an expression

of hope that a request for permission to marry will be granted, his description of his love becomes the poem: "She breathes purity, beauty, and filial / Piety / Her purity was forged in the fires of Mt. Sinai." This theme of the receptive lover is also apparent in the little poem "Song" (D 8) in which he describes his lover's sighs as "rose petals" which open and close. In "Song Of The Fisherman" which also appeared in Direction 8, the image of the rose is repeated. This time it is used to describe the color of the forehead of a fisherman who has frozen to death in a storm. "White Days" (D 2) is another brief love poem in which the "barnacles of memory" are gradually fading the image of his lover who walked down the road "through a filmy-white cloud / Of gossamer flakes gently treading." Thus Goldberg avoids a direct expression of his negative feelings about the war by looking back into a past that has been more real and more pleasant and toward a future in which those experiences may be redeemed. Although disillusionment with the present provides the incentive for his poetry, it is significant that disillusionment is not his theme.

The poems of David Mullen are somewhat more bitter and frank but no less averse to dealing directly with the war. In "Poem" (D 1) his subject is the nightclub belly-dancer whose significance becomes more apparent once the liquor has run out. Instead of seeing her "fern loveliness," he begins to see the more carnal aspects of her presence. Nevertheless, he consoles himself rather half-heartedly with the knowledge

that he can "buy another one / And laugh cimitars / At the traffic lights / Before I die." In "Song For Kaj" (D 1) the same theme is echoed with the exception that here the negro entertainer has died leaving the poet only with her memory:

> We took the "A" Train
> To a plumed and distant land
> Of tin castles, and licorice sticks,
> And beggars with jewel-lined coats,
> And young queens dancing
> To the instrumental hi-de-ho
> Of rugby players and wakes
> Through all our several summers
> Without Mr. Freud.

The melodramatic sentimentality of this poem illustrates Mullen's principal weakness. He was primarily a graphic artist and painter and of the Direction writers, his poetry is least effective. Often, as in "Triskaidekaphobia" and "Diabola" which appeared in Direction 2, the main theme is an adolescent self-pity caused by unrequited love. In the former poem he is left waiting "for night / To crush the roof / Breathless and afraid / Harpooning the moon with angry tears." In "Diabola" the artist has become bored by the conversation and leaves the room for "A kinder world outside / New faces . . . Safety / In bodies wanting to be loved / Without politics / and in hell / Without you." "Departure" (D 4) is an impressionistic, surreal poem in which the writer equates his feelings of freedom with the vast complexities of the sea. His alliterative description is a series of mixed metaphors which lead toward the question: "What stars, what weather will attend the launching of my ship?" "Campaign" (D 4) is

his only poem which deals with the violence of war. Here he is expressing the uneasy anticipation of an impending battle. The ominous silence is experienced from the point of view of the soldier who, about to be shipped out, knows "Something will happen / Soon." He also knows that "they are dying out there / With their tanks and flame throwers / On highway twenty-six," and he has a vision of himself returning home as a corpse. When the initiation of battle finally arrives, however, he becomes a man who understands the emotional crisis which accompanied the occasion "when Christ was lanced" but he still does not understand why men become involved in violence.

The work of Mullen, Goldberg, and Souster justifies to some extent Gnarowski's explanation of Direction as:

> . . . a periodical which spoke in tones of disillusioned youth caught between the ironic certainty of war and a vague, bitter hope of a better world . . . the landscape here is not only that of a bewildered twentieth century, but what is more important, it is that of an urban, mechanical and slightly futile North America.[100]

These remarks could just as well be applied to First Statement. With the end of the war and the dispersal of its editors to various parts of the country, Direction ceased publication. Thus, by 1946 the radical little magazines of the war years had disappeared. Direction 9, however, contained a brief editorial welcoming the newly established Northern Review:

> This new magazine, with the very Canadian and very richly suggestive title of "Northern Review," is the resulting product of the recent "Entente Cordiale" between the "First Statement" and "Preview" groups, and with, we know, a renewed vigour and a high standard of art, which was always evident to a high degree in their former pioneer journals.[101]

Rather than being the result of an entente cordiale between the two magazines, Northern Review was formed as a result of Preview's being absorbed or "engulfed" by First Statement.[102] Sutherland had a printing press and the continuing desire to expand First Statement into a more professional and influential periodical. This being the case, according to Patrick Anderson, the Preview group, who had already lost a great deal of their energy, "sank into his [Sutherland's] arms."[103]

The character of Northern Review was, from the beginning, different from that of Preview and First Statement. The magazine's printed format and attractive layout reflected Sutherland's personal dedication toward making Northern Review a credible and influential cultural periodical. The broad cultural interests which had been expressed to some extent in First Statement became dominant in Northern Review and each issue carried stories, criticism of films, drama, and painting, book reviews and poetry. Notably absent from the magazine is the social and political commentary which appeared in the earlier magazines from time to time. Although Sutherland's Marxism was becoming more doctrinaire, he did not allow politics to interfere with the literary and cultural purpose of Northern Review. Political and economic changes had obviously taken place in Canada, but as the opening editorial points out, comparable artistic development was not as evident:

> Our purpose is to present Canada to itself and abroad as a country where political and economic changes have not taken place without a real, though as yet not a qualitatively comparable, literary and artistic evidence.

We shall try to fulfill the classic function of the "Little magazine"- to afford a means of expression for the serious writer, who, without a reputation and without the advantages of commercial publicity, is nevertheless determined to make no concessions to the slick, the theatrical and the popular.[104]

One of Sutherland's chief ambitions was to improve the quality of Canadian writing through a revitalization of Canadian literary criticism. The most consistent critical theme in the magazine is an expression of the need for an aggressive, honest critical approach which refuses dependency upon facile nationalism or literary boosterism for its criteria of judgement. Sutherland here is emphasizing the same principles set out by A. J. M. Smith in the Twenties and by the New Frontier critics in the Thirties and the articles he contributed to the magazine reflect his attempt to provide examples for others to follow. Sutherland's discussions of P. K. Page, Patrick Anderson, A. M. Klein, and James Reaney among others, show his belief that the basis of good literary criticism rests upon close reading and exegesis of the work itself rather than upon external considerations.[105] After 1950 Sutherland's attitude changed drastically in this regard and he became increasingly reactionary and conservative up until his premature death in 1956. This phase of his career and its detrimental effect upon Northern Review will be discussed further in the next chapter. Present concern is with the magazine as the most important Canadian literary periodical of the late Forties.

The first and best known example of the aggressive type of criticism Sutherland was advocating at the time is

his review of the Poems of Robert Finch which appeared in Northern Review I,6. By specific references to the technique used in individual poems, he argues that Finch is an artistically incompetent literary hobbyist. Following the publication of this article Ralph Gustafson, A. J. M. Smith, and all of the Preview group resigned as editors of the magazine and Sutherland printed an explanation of his position in the following issue: "The editors who resigned maintained that this review, and similar pieces of criticism, were too harsh and unjust for publication, while the present editorial board held that criticism of this kind was badly needed in Canada."[106] Besides the fact that the resignations indicate that many of the contemporary writers were more timid in their convictions than Sutherland, the action shows that Northern Review was essentially Sutherland's magazine. There is no doubt that he would have been just as steadfast in his convictions had the entire board resigned. The magazine's editorial policy changed as Sutherland's literary attitudes changed and it is an interesting and enlightening irony that whereas the original editorial dispute arose because Sutherland's views were too radical, the writers of the early Fifties became disenchanted because his policies were too reactionary and conservative.

The same issue in which the notices of resignation appeared included an article by Sutherland entitled "Critics On The Defensive" which specifically outlined the problem with Canadian criticism and defined his position:

> I have yet to read one study of a Canadian critic or any mature inquiry into the state of our criticism . . . such

analysis is not a luxury which we can do without indefinitely. Criticism in Canada has developed tardily, and has barely found a voice in the last two decades. It is still almost exclusively concerned with Canadian poetry, and is just learning the art of close examination of the poem and the necessity of placing it in historical context. But we cannot dispense with inquiries into the nature of our criticism, or the products of a healthy polemical attitude.

Instead of this necessary self consciousness we find our critics almost invariably adopting a defensive attitude . . . Mr Smith wrote many years ago that "our condition will not improve until we have been roughly shocked by a work of art that is at once successful and obscene;" and his prediction is somewhat fulfilled by the new poets today, whose work is frequently successful as violent affirmation and as a reflection of violent reality. Does his remark not apply to Canadian criticism? Is it possible that to scatter our critics from their complacent perch, we need a criticism able to administer a violent shock?[107]

It is clear from this that Sutherland's review of Finch's Poems was intended to shock the literary establishment out of its complacency and force them to look analytically and honestly at the true merit of the poems which had won the Governor General's Award for 1946. In his sarcastic list of possible reasons why Finch had received the award is an implicit criticism of the established view of the role of the poet and the function of poetry. It echoes his previous criticism of the literary image of Charles G. D. Roberts which was published as "Great Things And Terrible" in Direction 9. The critical basis on which Finch was awarded the prize was the very basis which Sutherland so strongly opposed. He believed that the critics had chosen Finch because of his respectable academic reputation, his age, and his moral character rather than because of his talent as a poet. They had judged the man rather than the art. Thus, Sutherland used Finch to direct public attention toward the more important

problems inherent in the established system of critical judgement which were impeding not only the development of Canadian poetry but the advancement of Canadian culture in general.

Sutherland dealt further with the problems of Canadian criticism in his review of L. A. MacKay's The Ill Tempered Lover and Other Poems.[108] Again, he simply uses MacKay's book as a convenient means of approaching the subject he considered most important. MacKay had included a series of satires on Canadian poetry and Sutherland considered them incisive enough to serve as touchstones for his own views. Sutherland reiterated his position that the Canadian critic must be shamed into writing with "a semblance of honesty" if criticism itself was to advance beyond mere kindness and complacency. This could only happen, however, if critics came "to accept a self-critical Canadianism as a basic, if perhaps unspoken, premise of [their] thinking."[109] Sutherland felt that the vitality of the modern poetry movement of the early Forties had been seriously hindered by critical "kindness" and that the waning of poetic activity after the war was at least partly attributable to a lack of honest constructive criticism. But the tendency of critics to praise and placate Canadian writers was only part of the problem. A more important traditional tendency had been the avoidance of sound critical analysis by depending too heavily upon an "unthinking" type of Canadianism. Sutherland saw the new critical emphasis upon the necessity of understanding Canadian literature in an

international context as an equally false approach:

> In the past, we sought to hide our dishonesty under the guise of a so-called Canadianism—in reality a colonialism that respected only British imitation and mistook the success of the mere imitation for that of its model. Today our critics have found a curious and far more effective disguise: everywhere in Canada we hear it said that the national question does not matter and that the important thing is to understand and evaluate Canadian literature in international terms. It is a worthy ideal falsified by its application. We may safely say that, in the name of cosmopolitanism, a propagandization of Canadian literature is taking place, without valid basis and on a scale never dreamed of by the exponents of colonialism . . . For this perpetual assertion that we must consider Canadian literature in cosmopolitan terms, automatically includes the assumption that Canadian literature has an international status and exists on a footing with international culture. It is, I repeat, the most effective disguise for unthinking Canadianism.[110]

In Sutherland's view, this desire among critics to understand Canadian literature, and poetry in particular, in an international context was simply a defense against looking honestly at the writing itself. Just as a broad critical approach had led to meaningless generalization and abstract thinking, so this new approach was leading Canadian poetry toward similar vagueness and abstraction. Thus Sutherland concludes with a plea for a return to the literary principles on which the poetry of the early Forties had been based:

> There is, therefore, a demand in Canadian poetry (and Canadian writing) for the qualities which come with self-awareness—the qualities that distinguish MacKay's best satires: order, clarity and precision. The Canadian poet, whose heaven is the romantic abstraction, must be brought down to earth and taught to walk before he tries to fly. He cannot, however, learn to walk before he learns to "think more sternly": he lacks, above all, the critical intelligence.[111]

Sutherland's comments here are reminiscent of Leo Kennedy's "Calling Eagles" of the 1930's as well as the humanist social-realist poetic of Preview and First Statement. Canadian

poets, influenced by Canadian critics, were tending once more toward romantic abstraction and, by refusing to be self-aware, were forgetting the fundamental standards of "order, clarity, and precision" which First Statement particularly had worked so hard to establish. Sutherland here is re-emphasizing the role of the poet as a literary craftsman who functions not to confuse his reader with abstractions but to heighten his awareness of the world through precision and clarity resulting from his own critical awareness of himself. Thus, Sutherland rather neatly applies the same criticism to poets that he applies to the critics. Neither, in his view, were careful enough.

In the next issue of Northern Review (III,1) Sutherland again attacked the lack of precision on the part of Canadian critics by responding to a newspaper review which had praised the lyric ability of E. J. Pratt by mistakenly quoting E. A. Robinson's "Dark Hills." By attributing Robinson's poem to Pratt, the writer had proven Sutherland's accusation of the generally haphazard attitude of Canadians toward their own cultural achievements and it was toward the improvement of this attitude that Northern Review was dedicated. "Our critics," Sutherland observed, "do not lack positive opinions, but they are careless of fact and illustration and averse to the detailed study without which opinions cannot be verified. They are adept at notation and generalization, but for sustained analysis they have little heart."[112]

Sutherland's determination to set an example for other

critics to follow is well illustrated by two articles he published soon after the above comments appeared. In the Fall 1949 issue of Contemporary Verse Crawley published Sutherland's "Old Dog Trait: An Extended Analysis." It is the longest piece of criticism printed in Contemporary Verse and, being an inquiry into Northrop Frye's review of The Book Of Canadian Poetry, it is an example of the kind of attention Sutherland believed should be given to Canadian critics. The review, "Canada and Its Poetry" had appeared six years before in Canadian Forum[113] and Sutherland was the first to recognize the significance of Frye's now famous conclusion that: "the central theme of Canadian poetry . . . is . . . a riddle of inexplicable death: the fact that life struggles and suffers in a nature which is blankly indifferent to it."[114] Sutherland understood that the great virtue of Frye's thinking "is that it supplies us with the first precise definition of the native tradition in a rounded sense."[115] However, he is quick to point out specific weaknesses in Frye's theory. In an itemized list, Sutherland suggested that although the theory applies to older poets such as Pratt, it is not so applicable to younger writers such as Page. He also suggests that Frye's definition of phrases like "native tradition," "recognizable Canadian accent," and his linking of the "unconscious horror of nature" with the "subconscious horrors of the mind" are rather tenuous and in need of further explanation. Sutherland's perception of the importance of Frye's effort to synthesize the Canadian poet's response to his environment, however, is

an indication of his own critical acumen as is his structuring of his article in a series of brief points for further critical consideration. Sutherland's article on Frye is thus a practical example of the type of aggressive inquiry into Canadian criticism which he had previously advocated in "Critics On The Defensive." An example of the careful, textual criticism Sutherland felt was necessary with regard to Canadian poetry is provided in his review of James Reaney's The Red Heart and Other Poems which appeared in Northern Review III,4. Reaney had been publishing in Contemporary Verse and Northern Review for several years and with the appearance of his first collection had gained considerable critical acclaim. Sutherland's objective, in keeping with his critical principles, was to give truthful and realistic consideration to Reaney's poetic merit by studying his work first hand rather than by discussing what others had said about it. He is attempting a rational, honest assessment:

> James Reaney is the most interesting poet to appear during the relatively sterile period in Canadian poetry since 1945. Perhaps this fact may lead us to attach rather more significance to his work than it actually possesses. A good deal of radio publicity has been given his first volume, The Red Heart and Other Poems, and something of a Reaney boom seems to be underway. The publicity is all to the good, provided it leads to a serious evaluation of the poet's work. But it is going rather far to assert that Reaney has a great deal that is technically new to contribute to Canadian poetry (I would say he had very little), or to describe him as a "first-rate poet." There is no doubt about Reaney's gift for music and imagery. But it is a question whether he has found a mature form of expression.[116]

After cutting through the fashionable image of the poet to the basic questions on which a judgement of his work can be based, Sutherland proceeds to consider some of the poems in

detail. This he does by comparing the versions in the book with the versions which had appeared previously in Contemporary Verse in order to ascertain the direction of Reaney's poetic development. He shows that for the most part, Reaney's earlier versions are superior to the later revisions and suggests that he may be developing in a negative rather than a positive manner. Sutherland's attention to detail and his critical diligence in following the poems back to their origins serves as an example of the thorough methods he felt Canadian critics must acquire if criticism and poetry were to improve.

The main emphasis, then, of Northern Review in the Forties was upon a broad awareness of the Canadian cultural milieu. In terms of literature, Sutherland was most concerned with improving the quality of criticism so that poetry in particular might benefit. The attitude toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet, however, is not clearly defined in the magazine. It was Sutherland's polemical "Introduction" to Other Canadians which served that purpose in 1947. Northern Review had been in existence for a year when Other Canadians was published and Sutherland's critical introduction provides a retrospective insight into the poetic of First Statement as well as that of Northern Review. The essay is in part another example of Sutherland's aggressive attitude toward Canadian criticism which he felt was wasting itself upon a regressive interest in the past:

> Our criticism cannot have a living function, because it is entirely concerned with Canadian writing of the last century, or with movements of the twenties and thirties which have either proved abortive or been superseded by something else.

> It can say nothing, except by an indirection, that does not make the past seem more significant and more complicated than it really is; that does not distort the nature of the present; that does not confuse the general picture of what is called Canadian literature. It is concerned with the past only for the sake of the past, and therefore it is meaningless and dead.[117]

This interest in the poetry of the past was also harmful because it tended to separate poetry from reality and thus obstruct what Sutherland considered to be poetry's primary function of communicating with the "ordinary man." Sutherland here is not only restating what the First Statement critics had said several years before, he is also foreshadowing the critical position that Louis Dudek would take up ten years later in Delta: that is, that the function of poetry should not be considered to be fundamentally different from the function of prose. If the writer can communicate with the ordinary man through the medium of prose, he should try to write poetry which is equally accessible. In Sutherland's words, the critics should consider that:

> . . . the poet retains human attributes in spite of being a poet, that his materials are tangible often in spite of appearance, and that he has something to say which frequently has meaning for the ordinary man. We accept the value of this idea where prose is concerned, and often judge it with regard to its relevance to reality. Why then, do we regard poetry in a totally different way? May it not be that the actual environment is even more essential in the case of poetry?[118]

The primary thrust of all Sutherland's criticism during the latter half of the Forties was merely a more elaborate extension of the arguments for the "humanization" of poetry which had been advanced abortively by Preview and then further refined by the First Statement writers. The gap between the poet and his audience had to be closed if poetry was to serve

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THE FUNCTION OF POETRY AND THE ROLE OF THE POET...

its modern function of providing common ground between the ethos of the average man and the cultural values represented by art. Sutherland was convinced that it was the young poets like Louis Dudek, Ronald Hambleton, P. K. Page, Raymond Souster, James Wreford, Patrick Anderson, Margaret Avison, Irving Layton, James Reaney, Bruce Ruddick, Neufville Shaw, Kay Smith, and Miriam Waddington whose work he had brought together in Other Canadians who were making the most significant progress toward communication with the average reader because of their interest in "events and ideas whose importance is neither ephemeral or imaginary to the living and thinking individual."[119] He further itemized their poetic aims in this regard by suggesting that "they intend at least to speak to the average man of everyday realities and of the principles which operate in them. They are determined on principle not to ignore the coarse bustle of humanity."[120] The function of poetry for Sutherland, however, was not only social in the sense that it should attempt to capture what Anderson had called "the feel of people." The "Introduction" also shows that he associated socialist politics with these writers as well. In this, Sutherland was somewhat out of step with the times because after the war the general public came to associate Socialism with Communism as a totalitarian ideology which was to be feared.[121] Although he was right in assuming that their attitude toward poetry had originally been derived from wartime socialist ideals, his comment that "The seven-day fireworks of the world's creation matter less [to these

poets] than the creation of the socialist state,"[122] must have seemed rather irrelevant and misleading by 1947. The wish to link social-realist poetry with socialist politics, however, continues in Canada to some extent up until the early Fifties. Sutherland, while betraying his own political bias and misreading the political temper of the post-war world, also shows his sincerity in attempting to establish a strong rationale for modern realistic, proletarian poetry. He uses socialism as a device for associating Canadian poetry with modern North American concerns as well:

> Socialism entails something else which is of leading importance for the Canadian writer. We cannot embark on an effort to find Canadian solutions for our problems without at the same time emphasizing our connection with this continent and playing a more unqualified part as a member of the North American group of nations.[123]

The First Statement and Direction writers had acknowledged the growing importance of understanding Canadian literature as a North American branch of the English tradition which had much in common with the idiom of the United States. Sutherland reaffirmed this point of view in his "Introduction" rather prophetically:

> If the influence is still sporadic, and has no genuine focus, it is widespread enough to justify our saying that Canadian poetry struggles to follow the American example even while its dominant bias remains English . . . It is quite apparent that the American example will become more attractive to Canadian writers; that we are approaching a period when we will have "schools" and "movements" whose origin will be American. And perhaps it is safe to say that such a period is the inevitable half-way house from which Canadian poetry will pass toward an identity of its own.[124]

By the early 1950's Sutherland's prediction was borne out in the association of Souster, Layton, and Dudek with American

writers such as Cid Corman and Robert Creeley and the subsequent establishment of Contact magazine.

The attitudes toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet which Sutherland expressed in the "Introduction" to Other Canadians, thus establish the basis for his selection of much of the poetry which appeared in Northern Review during the Forties. Just as Other Canadians was intended to provide a representative sampling of the new poetry of the early 1940's, Northern Review provided an ongoing selection of work by the poets who continued writing after the war. Their poetry indicates that although the period from 1945 to 1950 is generally considered to be a relatively sterile one in the development of modern Canadian poetry, these years were vital in the sense that they served as a watershed between the social-realist poetic of the early Forties and the changes in attitude toward the function of poetry which began to appear in the Fifties. Poets associated with Contemporary Verse, Preview, First Statement, and Direction all published in the magazine between 1945 and 1950 and it is through an examination of this work that similarities and differences between their wartime poetry and their postwar writing can be observed.

A. J. M. Smith and F. R. Scott, representing the old guard of Canadian modernism, each published poems in the early issues of Northern Review. Smith's poem "The Dead" (NR I,1) is very similar in its pessimistic vision of the world to the poetry which appeared in the early issues of Contemporary

Verse and Preview. His expression of the universal guilt felt by a post-war generation who have been for so long involved in a meaningless, inhuman conflict is, however, not characteristic of the poetry published in the magazine. The vision of the dead arising like spectres in the conscience of the average man seems a throwback to some of the poetry that was written in the late Thirties and appears out of place among the large number of poems in which the war no longer plays a significant thematic role. Scott's poem as well is uncharacteristic of the Northern Review writing. "Laurentian Shield" (NR I,3) describes the impact of modern technology upon the rich natural resources of northern Canada. He uses the metaphor of self-articulation as a means of expressing the gradual growth toward settlement and productivity which is taking place there and he envisions the country as able to speak for itself in the future. But this poem too is a throwback to an earlier inspiration in its concluding tone of didactic social optimism. The last stanza, for example, is more reminiscent of the social voice of the Thirties than characteristic of the modern voice of the late Forties:

> But a deeper cry is for justice, heard in the mines,
> The scattered camps and the mills, a language of life,
> And what will be written in the full culture of occupation
> Will come, presently, tomorrow,
> From millions whose hands can turn this rock into children.

These rather traditional social poems, published shortly after the magazine began, are in sharp contrast to the relatively anti-social, introspective poems of younger writers such as James Reaney and Anne Wilkinson which appeared

in Northern Review at the close of the Forties. Reaney's "The Bird Of Paradise" (NR II,6), for example, laments the fact that the poet's creative powers will someday disappear. It is a completely personal expression which satirically employs the bird of paradise as a symbol of the artist's youthful response to the beauty of the world. But just as the colors of the bird are beginning to fade, so, he says, "my tongue like the wick / Of a lamp shall someday fail / Of any glinting words and pale / Shall falter with a sigh and pout / That all Fire, all Hell, all Poetry is out." Similarly "The Canadian" (NR III,2) is an internal monologue in which the poet feels that his Canadian identity is best defined by physical, spiritual, and historical imprisonment. This view of himself is elicited by the atmosphere of the farm house in which he is sitting during "the centre of the Christmas vacation." The room is painted in dull colors, pictures of his grandfather and the fathers of confederation hang on the walls, and the winter air has frosted the window panes. Thus he feels "bottled up" in a "warm windless dungeon," and longs for escape to the freedom of exotic tropical lands where men need neither clothes, conscience, nor traditions. In this frame of mind he is left only with a feeling of longing:

> . . . in this dark parlour,
> Dull green, brown and maroon,
> The colour of starling feathers,
> This stuffy dingy room.
> These dreams of tropical weathers!
> My grim grandfather!
> The Fathers of Confederation!
> These windows embossed
> With a mocking white imitation
> Of what I wish for, in frost.

Although the poem has social and historical implications, they are important only in relation to their effect upon the speaker himself.

As the title "Climate Of The Brain" (NR III,1) implies, Anne Wilkinson's poems are even more private than Reaney's. Here her wish is to create a climate of rest and passivity for the brain so that, like buds under winter snow, the psyche can renew itself for further confrontations with the world. She longs for intellectual repose: coldness instead of heat; a "possum death" which will allow a richer and more vital rebirth than would otherwise be possible. With the mind stilled and creativity lulled she can look forward to the time when "the skull ablaze with golden flowers / Fools the April morning." The poem is esoteric and personal and allows the reader to identify only minimally with its theme. Instead the reader must rely upon his ability to freely relate to the implications inherent in the archetypes of winter, spring, cold, heat, death, and rebirth. His response must be in terms of the generalized emotions which attach to shared mythic experiences. Wilkinson here prefigures the mythopoeic function of poetry which gained popularity in the Fifties and she indicates the preliminary signs of reaction to the social poetic which had dominated Canadian poetry since the Thirties. "Black and White" which also appeared in Northern Review III,1 is similarly structured around a core of mythic images:

> On still black water, water lilies
> Are less lily than swan;
> Here, in still black water, two
> White horses drinking, three white swans.

The stark images are almost oriental in inspiration with the opposing qualities of black and white presented in such a way that they eventually come to complement one another. In a similar way the land-bound nature of the horses is finally joined with the air-borne nature of the swans in the reflection from the water and at the end of the poem "Suddenly the stallions rise! / The chase is on! / Two white horses, / Three swans flying on a still black sky."

The appeal of Anne Wilkinson's poems, and to some extent, of Reaney's depends upon the reader's ability to relate to their artistic expression of a subjective point of view. The poems are directed back upon the self rather than out towards the condition of others in society. In this they represent an attitude toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet which is quite different from that represented by A. J. M. Smith and F. R. Scott in the early issues of the magazine. It also separates them from the Preview and First Statement writers who occupy the middle ground between these two extremes. The poetic tendencies that Wilkinson and Reaney here foreshadow will be discussed further in the next chapter; the significant point at present is that the poetry of Northern Review during the Forties spans the area between a modified social didacticism on the one hand and a developing mythopoeic technique on the other.

The majority of poems in Northern Review fall between the extremes outlined above and represent the continuing efforts of those writers who had been associated with

Contemporary Verse, Preview, and First Statement. It is this poetry which most nearly embodies the critical ideals that Sutherland advocated in Other Canadians and it provides a contemporary sampling of those poets who continued to write after the war.

Dorothy Livesay and Floris McLaren published in Northern Review during the Forties and their poems show an increasing concern with the expression of a subjective response to their environment. Livesay had shown evidence of this much earlier but her Northern Review poems provide an interesting example of her developing point of view. She moves from the subject of others in "Small Fry" which appeared in the first number of the magazine to the subject of self in "Interval With Fire" and "The Invisible Sun" which were published in the February-March issue of 1950. "Small Fry" (NR I,1) begins with her perception of the talk of young children as "bird-brief, irresponsible / The answer asked / Not waited for / And the word punched / Back like a volley-ball." She then equates the speech of the children with the "early voice" of universal man who was once "Heart free and eased." The implication in the poem is that mankind has outgrown his ability to speak from the heart in a spontaneous manner just as the children will soon learn the rules of discourse and be able to speak responsibly and at length on "important" subjects. "Interval With Fire" (NR III,1), unlike this poem, is entirely concerned with her personal experience. The poetic voice speaks in the first person and

relates the experience of having passed through a time of dejection and unresponsiveness into a period of renewed vitality. This "new found fire" which allows her to again realize "the total wonder" of the universe has come with her ability to accept the axiom that "In the habit of living / Begins disbelief" and she resolves once more to leave the safety of "the valley" for the mountain heights which, though more dangerous, are closer to the sun. In "The Invisible Sun" (NR III,1) Livesay is again concerned with the subject of self. Here it is the heat of her hands which reminds her of the significance of her daily routine of work. They "burn with the work done and the night to come; / Rounded in sleep, to shape an invisible sun." Thus, the burning sensation in her hands suggests accomplishment, satisfaction, and a fulfillment which allows her untroubled sleep.

Although Floris McLaren's poems have an introspective quality which is similar to Livesay's, they are unlike Livesay's in that they deal almost entirely with abstractions. This also places them outside the critical strictures of John Sutherland whose principal concern was to promote the clear and direct expression of concrete subject matter. "In A Garden" (NR III,4) is a good example of her technique. While weeding the garden she is confronted by a "nightmare" which she presumed had been "safely housed in the midnight stable." The reader can only assume that the nightmare is a manifestation of some hidden aspect of her personality which is normally repressed but its significance is never entirely clear. After

noticing that nothing around her has changed despite the appearance of the apparition, she concludes by saying that she is uncertain of its meaning. This not only leaves the reader confused as to the significance of the nightmare but also uncertain about whether it really occurred at all.

This same interest in abstraction characterizes "The Hitch Hiker" (NR III,4). This is a somewhat more accessible poem in that it deals with the rather common theme of the individual's psychological relationship with his alter-ego or doppelgänger. The mystery of human identity, however, after being described in terms of mirror images which are familiar yet inscrutable, is in the end incapable of solution because: "Every place is like another / Every road turns back upon itself / And every stranger wears the remembered face."

The tendency toward subjectivity and abstraction illustrated by Livesay and McLaren is also evident in some of the poems that the Preview writers contributed to the magazine. Two cases in point are "Subjective Eye" by P. K. Page and "Regression" by Bruce Ruddick, both of which appeared in Northern Review I,2. Page's poem discusses the external world as it is perceived by the eye which has just opened from the internal world of sleep. The subjective eye is still influenced by the smudged symbols of dreams and as a result its perception is distorted. The internal world, however, is just as significant as the external world and the natural tendency for the sleepy viewer is to believe not that his eyes deceive him, but that the "green world" outside does.

Page here is concerned with giving significance to the whole question of human awareness by centering upon that particular type of perception that exists between the moments of waking and sleeping. By doing so she calls attention to the significance of the subjective, internal reality in determining the degree to which people are able to gain knowledge. Although Page is concerned with subjectivity itself, her poem is not abstract. She attempts, in fact, to use images in such a way that the abstractions associated with the half waking, half sleeping state are given specific, recognizable form. Bruce Ruddick, on the other hand, makes use of abstraction in a negative manner which only functions to puzzle and obstruct the reader. "Regression," besides being removed a step from reality by its allegorical structure, is further removed by its vague pattern of philosophical thought. The poem deals most generally with the inadequacy of contemporary man's response to the mythic wisdom of the past. Modern man is too literal and pragmatic in his interpretation of the world and so is doomed to failure when attempting to learn from history.

The other Preview writer that Northern Review published was Patrick Anderson who contributed nine poems between 1946 and 1949. Anderson's poems are much different than those of Page and Ruddick and they are, for the most part, simpler in form and less ambitious in theme than those he published earlier in Preview. He published three poems in Northern Review I,2 which illustrate this difference. "Voyage

au Saguenay" is mainly concerned with describing the emotions of vacationers who are embarking on a scenic trip down the river. The ship's environment excites them and heightens their response to life. They become different people once on board and are united in their anticipation of adventure. Anderson is interested in the social atmosphere and the phenomenon which draws strangers together under such circumstances. He concludes the poem by suggesting that although their hopes for the future may not be profound ("golf and bridge and love?") there is virtue in the fact that they are excited and looking forward to tomorrow. This direct and simple style is also employed in "La Soiree Chez Nous" which is similarly concerned with recreating a particular social atmosphere through descriptions of people, objects, and actions. The setting here is a French-Canadian farm house in which the speaker is spending an evening with the family. The atmosphere is peaceful and quiet:

> Madame rolls a cigarette and sits
> tranquilly, her bare legs apart,
> under a picture of Christ who picks
> with delicate fingers at his Sacred Heart
> C'est tranquille . . .? "Yes, yes, it is quiet."

The details selected in his description are simple and ordinary as is the family itself and at the end of the poem he relates their ease with themselves, their religion, and their surroundings to the harmony of the natural universe:

> We sit, au foyer, and at base. Above
> lift the great hills of pasture and of hay
> and fall again in the dark furry capes.
> The stars burn like ammonia in the sky
> While Marie-Aimee, smiling softly, plucks
> a rooster on her lap for rosary.

Most of Anderson's Northern Review poems are similarly directed outwards toward a description of others rather than internally toward a revelation of self. Even in "The Softness Of Hair" (NR I,2) his interest is directed toward the connotations of human personality which are associated with the soft hair of children. Their hair is seen (somewhat eccentrically) as a beautiful extension of the body which "whispers into the air / its music through taut staves of comb." This rather forced image is more characteristic of the poetic technique Sutherland objected to in Preview than of the poems Anderson published in Northern Review. In the April-May issue for 1949, four of his poems were printed and they are not overwrought or confused by strained metaphysical imagery. "Song Of Two Friends" (NR II,5) is a narrative description of the different philosophies of life which two friends share. Their difference of opinion, however, does not drive them apart. Rather, they are brought closer together through a respect for each other's view of the world. The speaker in the poem considers nature to be most beautiful when it is most primitive and he feels that man is most himself when free of social comforts and restrictions. His friend takes the view that nature, like man, is best when controlled and cultivated. They also disagree with regard to the method by which life should be understood. The speaker holds that humanity cannot be fully appreciated without considering the dark side of human nature which is predisposed to sin. The friend, of course, takes the opposite view; that

"what's lovely to the eye / and natural is joy." The speaker concludes that although they are "not of one mind . . . two minds may fall / like logs upon that fire / which burns and blesses all," and he realizes that they have learned something positive from each other. He has learned that there are other ways of approaching reality than as a dreamer through a cloud of gloom and his friend has discovered "some of my world's division / the hope beyond all bounds / and the hopeless prison / firing my liberty." Thus the poem is essentially an expression of the view that men may mutually benefit from associating with each other regardless of ideological differences. This poem, and the others in a more indirect manner, confirm that Anderson maintained his belief in the social function of poetry long after Preview and the war had ended.

Two poems in Northern Review II,5 are of different types. "Song From A Play" is an exercise in rhyme and metre celebrating spring through the repetition of the chorus: "and spring I cry, / Love I try / deep into Helen's dancing eye." "To T. S. Eliot And Others," on the other hand, offers whimsical apologies to Auden, Rilke, Spender, and Thomas for pointing out the ways in which they have failed as artists:

> With apologies to Wystan
> who polished a piston,
> tinkered with the starter,
> motored through the era
> but faltered later . . .
> and also some to Stephen
> the flowery and uneven,
> running at a pylon
> half crying and half smilin'

The poem not only suggests that Anderson had outgrown his

reverence for the English moderns by 1949 but also that he had gained a sense of humor. The serious poet, however, appears again in "An Apple Before Bedtime." Here the poet is again concerned with the variability of human emotions and the imagination's dependency upon external influences. He recreates a childhood experience, remembering that once night has fallen the imagination envisions the worst possible hazards:

> The house sinks below the horrible hill
> and rag whimpering field. In a whisper
> dark blows up pine, creaks a barn door;
> stone rings now, bats flit, water gums in a pail . . .

Once this atmosphere is established the poem dramatically recreates the fears of the boy going to bed after dark. He is only secure when his mother lights the lamp and is there with him. The comfort and security of the new atmosphere which she has created are heightened by its contrast to his previous fears and his wish is to prolong the sense of security for as long as possible. This he does by slowly eating his apple before bedtime with "apple and hour, all cradled . . . still as wool." The poem implies a parallel to the human condition in general. All men seek refuge from their fears and a place of security and comfort in a hostile world. Once the refuge is discovered it is difficult to relinquish and often makes men childlike in their refusal to face those real or imagined terrors which are always close at hand. Anderson thus remains a social poet in Northern Review. Instead of insisting upon political or social reforms, however, he concerns himself with an exploration of the various configur-

ations of human personality as manifested in different interpersonal relationships. He is also less introspective and more descriptive than in many of his earlier poems and he is consistently interested in responding to the world through a sensitivity to the condition of others rather than through an expression of his subjective state of mind.

It is clear then, that besides welcoming work by older writers such as F. R. Scott and A. J. M. Smith and younger writers such as Wilkinson and Reaney during the Forties, Northern Review also published a variety of poems by people associated with Contemporary Verse and Preview. As might be expected, however, the majority of poems were contributed by Layton, Souster, and Dudek who had been more directly involved with Sutherland and First Statement. Neither is it surprising that their poems represent best the proletarian social-realist poetic that they had helped to establish earlier in the decade.

Irving Layton reveals the same personae that characterized his First Statement writing. In poems like "One, And Two" (NR II,2) and "Music For Two Pianos" (NR II,3) he is the flippant rogue mocking the world in colloquial language. "One, And Two" features an ape who performs as a literary critic and advises the "poet-mockers" to "Get off your phylactery boxes / For how will you run / when you hear the foxes?" In "Music For Two Pianos" the hero is the egocentric, insatiable lover who knows "at least twenty good abortionists in this city" and wishes his lover would put on some weight

because he is "getting calluses on [his] arms and legs." Layton also takes on the role of political thinker in "Karl Marx" (NR I,4) where he pays homage to Marx as a man whose bones are still "charged with lightning." Through the image of a riderless funeral horse, the poet hopes that Marxian enthusiasm for social reform will return and that "the black ugly beast" who is his "beauty" will again "Churn up these white fields of leprosy." The persona of the poet himself is used in "A Poor Poet Is Grateful For A Sudden Thaw" (NR I,3) and "Woman In The Square" (NR II,3). The poet in "A Poor Poet Is Grateful For A Sudden Thaw" associates his own emotional attitude with the barrenness of winter. His life, like his poetry, lacks inspiration: "Icicles zig-zagged across the page, / A ready graph for the winter's rage; And sidestreets mock heroically / Burned white like tusks of ivory." But the sudden thaw which occurs changes his mood as it changes the city and the atmosphere of winter. In contrast to the former state of dejection and lethargy, the thaw brings with it new evidence of vitality and action: "The sidestreets blossom with lively smells; / Men are raising a shout in the town, / It might even bring the system down." And finally the poet, who previously had "thieves picking at [his] locks," also realizes the foolishness of his former state of mind and sees that "The thieves ran off with the wig of a clown" rather than with anything significant.

In "Woman In The Square" Layton's poet is "stone-deaf" and the perfumed beauty of the sophisticated lady in

the square is wasted on him as it is upon "the incurious tramps" who pass her by. The poet, whose greatest achievement is that he "once wrote a beautiful poem to a louse," sees her presence as something which makes the whole day trivial but he is impotent to give it significance and the day finally turns to evening which "in mauve and pink / Slides, a furtive homosexual / Around the enormous thighs / Of the puritanical trees." All of these poems in which the persona has been created as a character, are rather contrived and eccentric in their view of the world and they do not represent Layton at his best. He seems more concerned with shocking or surprising his reader than with writing good poetry and this inconsistence and apparent willingness to "throw away" experiences upon trivial poetic statements is a characteristic which has persisted in his writing to the present day. Northern Review, however, also contains examples of his more serious efforts.

"The Yard" (NR I,3) is a poem in which the speaker's view of the world is entirely negative as he looks from his "turret" out into the yard:

> No one prospers outside my door;
> I sit like a suave criminal with an old woman,
> Her hair time-soaped her hands folded
> Like a hymnal. Here everyone is dying out a pain.
> I spy from my restricted gallery, a turret.

The turret which isolates him from the outside world at first appears to be a refuge which allows the viewer a special status in the universe. He is like the ivory-tower artist who remains an aloof observer of society. But he cannot

escape the whispers of humanity which arise from below like the branches of the tree which reach over his bannister "for manslayer or saint" and the poem concludes with the speaker's recognition that he is neither of these. Instead he shares the condition of the people below his window: "I am neuter. I am you." His willingness to identify himself with the condition of the average man is further expressed in "Eagle" (NR I,4). In this poem he seeks wisdom among the city slums. He likens himself to an eagle who seeks there the "rock-bound province of the mind" despite the wounds and frustrations he must endure to reach it:

> The evil lamps stab me- once, twice!
> I have met many princes returning, taller than I;
> Their eyes are disenchanted and sorrowful
> And the doorknob they offer me
> Is heavy and cold as ice.

The poem affirms, however, that if truth is to be found, it will be found among the troubled environment of the poor rather than elsewhere. The injured eagle can be heard there and, like him, the poet will persist in his search for the higher levels of wisdom that exist in the lower reaches of society. The image of the eagle recalls Leo Kennedy's frequent use of eagle imagery in the poetry he wrote during the Thirties. He also suggested that the eagle could best fulfill his nature by associating with the "groundlings" rather than by living in solitary flight above them. The image of the hunting bird and the poet's association with the proletariat recurs in Layton's "English For Immigrants" (NR I,1). Here he is a hawk who soars above the backs of the immigrants who "bend" over

their English lessons in the same diligent manner that they bend over their crops in the fields. Their deference to the hawk-teacher is exaggerated as is their desire to learn the language of their new country. The teacher's cynicism with his own accomplishments is contrasted to the immigrants' childlike pleasure in theirs and the poem concludes with a satiric image of the students graduating as "Forty amphipods pointing flutes at heaven."

Just as Layton's Northern Review poems are further examples of the type of social poetry he was writing during the early Forties, so the poems of Louis Dudek represent a continuation of his earlier style. With few exceptions, Dudek's Northern Review poems are directly concerned with social themes. Two unusual ones are "To A Literary Patron" (NR II,4) and "Come on, Mr. Freud" (NR III,4). The former poem has some social implications in that the speaker is attempting to resolve the question of how devotion to art can be reconciled with a world where "souls plumetted like stars into the river / And automobiles made swastikas on the green." The literary patron urges him to "try in earnest / And give [his] time attentively to- Art" but the young poet finds his advice somewhat meaningless if it implies that devotion to art must deny a devotion to the problems of the world. The other poem, "Come on, Mr. Freud," is simply an exercise in cryptic imagery and private symbols. It describes a surrealistic dream and challenges the reader through reference to Freud, to attempt a psychological interpretation. The poem

is an interesting montage of images but, as the first stanza indicates, it does not benefit by explication:

> I dreamed that I was sitting with God on my knees
> While three unhappy hanged men whistled in the trees;
> A stream was flowing by of curdled blood and milk
> With a lady in the current wrapped in blood-stained silk.

A grotesque and Godless vision of society perhaps, but really a dream-like society which exists only in the poet's mind. Dudek's other poems treat the social environment more realistically.

"Night Fire" (NR II,4) and "Street Lamp" (NR II,4) depend upon descriptions of particular urban phenomena for their implications. "Night Fire" is a straightforward description of the atmosphere which is created by a fire in the city. It is an occasion which elicits a microcosmic reenactment of all the city's activities from its noise, excitement, and pressing crowds, to the basic subconscious pleasure that people receive from scenes of pain and disaster. The fire exposes the real violence and danger inherent in urban society and reveals the true values of city-dwellers:

> And the fire is a torch held in the night's darkness
> A frenzied joy, a fiesta, a feast of flame.
> It is a blaze burning out a heavenly hole,
> A hag of flame leaping and roaring hurrah.

In "Street Lamp" the poet is concerned with man's natural tendency to see the urban environment as more appealing than it actually is. The ugly street lamp shines like a moon through the branches of a tree and deceptively creates a false image of beauty: "the eye, seeing it, makes / of a metal universe spinning over traffic- stars, moons, and

galaxies." But it is also the nature of urban man to see quickly through these deceptions "to the underworlds of fact no eye can gild, / or love," because this is a world of metal and glass objects of his own making and he recognizes that it is "our own blood that glistens in the branches." The urban environment thus limits man's ability to perceive that which is beautiful by making him suspicious of where beauty really lies. The opposite point of view is taken in this regard in "Midnight" (NR III,6) where the real moon is seen through the trees as a "Bauer ball of light." The final result is the same however, in that the sounds and sights of the city, described in terms of waterfalls, fruit, and "splashes of daylight," are really only superficial impressions which mask the significant urban characteristics of loneliness and silence.

The condition of the individual in such a society is the subject of "Looking At Stenographers" (NR I,2) and "Les Innocents" (NR II,4). "Looking At Stenographers" is a poem which is reminiscent of Dudek's "Offices" which appeared several years earlier in First Statement. In that poem, as in this one, he is more critical of the stenographers themselves than of the system for which they work. Even though they are trapped in a situation they cannot control, he resents their passive acceptance of their condition and their lack of imagination:

> They die in gossamer cages their frail minds can never break-
> That one might have broken steel and stone.
> I am empty of sympathy or any pity
> For their shrill irritable songs. Turning to eagles and hawks
> For paradoxes to satisfy the heart,

I think of Godwin unable to live in his own light,
Of Proudhon, proofreading the "Lives of the Saints,"
Of Marx on the New York Tribune- and laugh.

Besides being guilty of misplaced aggression and a lack of human compassion in this poem he also presents himself as an intellectual snob rather than a Sandburgian proletarian artist.

He is somewhat more sensitive in "Les Innocents." Here Dudek is expressing the speed with which urban society transforms children from innocents into experienced men and women of the world. The careful attention given by parents to their children's moral and social upbringing is soon lost after the age of puberty is reached. The young boys in the poem, who are "not really bad boys at all," are already sexually attracted to Clarissa "the saint of Prince Street" and the speaker realizes that, like her parents, she too "will soon be a mother / By one of the boys with the most unholy eyes." Under different social conditions the transition from innocence to experience might possibly have been more gradual and perhaps some of the desirable aspects of youth would not be entirely lost. It is the city which contributes most to the sudden change.

Dudek's attitude toward urban society, however, is not entirely negative as "Flowers In Windows" (NR II,1) shows. This poem develops from the contrast that the poet observes between the life and beauty of flowers blooming in the window box and the lifelessness of the man-made objects which surround them: "they are the life that answers, / they are the dwellers, and the rest is dead." He then goes on to observe

that just as the flowers provide evidence of a hidden and inscrutable ordering force behind all life, so the cities that men have created also offer signs that a greater ordering principle exists. His confidence is expressed in stanza three:

> Though lost in the ignorant traffic, I would yet rejoice,
> There is some hidden wisdom in all gardens,
> cities, in the leaves of flowers, the eyes of boys!
> The dog is not reckless of that message, nor
> are the men and women rattling through the stores.

His final question: "What is it in man which builds a city?" is really a rephrasing of his original question regarding the creative force which causes flowers to grow as manifestations of universal order. Although he can never find the answer he is seeking, the poem affirms his faith in a universal principle of order and allows him to look beyond the superficial evidence of chaos. Dudek also understands that the beauty of the natural and man-made environment cannot be explained in the scientific terms of botany, mathematics, or physics. The essence of beauty, which is the essence of meaning, is only available to men through intuition. This same interest in the inadequacy of science to explain the mystery of human perception is demonstrated in "O Clever Sight" (NR I,3). This poem is Dudek's only one in Northern Review during the Forties which does not deal with a social theme. Instead he is fascinated by the inexplicable process by which the brain transforms a "proton" of light entering the eye into so many colors in such a short period of time. The light left the sun eight minutes before it was perceived

but the distance between the human eye and the brain is even more vast because in the instant between entry into the eye and perception, the mind enables the perceiver to dissect the light: "unravel, / pink from violet, / petal from petal in a rose."

Dudek's Northern Review poems are not essentially different in inspiration or technique from those he published in the early Forties. He displays the same keen awareness of his environment and the same frequent lack of consistency in completing his poetic statements. With the exception of "Flowers In Windows" his view of society is somewhat cynical and he leaves a similar impression to that described by Sutherland in a stanza of his "Guide To The Canadian Poets" which he published in Northern Review II,2:

Cynic

The times, as he observes
Pay him no compliments at all:
Therefore, why should he
Pay compliments to the times?

Raymond Souster published only four poems in Northern Review during the period and, being much the same as his earlier work, they require little comment in the present context. "After Dark" (NR I,1) is reminiscent of several of his earlier poems in its concern with the necessity of human love as a refuge that "pushes" people "above / the work at the office, the banal situations, the long hours of their lives." "Times Square" (NR II,2) is also familiar in its description of the urban "boxed horror / where the world ends . . ." which is Times Square. The suffocating urban environ-

ment is also the subject of "Brant Place" and "Lambton Riding Woods," both of which appeared in Northern Review III,1. In "Brant Place" Souster shows a genuine compassion for the children who are trapped in "the shadows of factories / [and] the dirt of streets / they will know forever." "Lambton Riding Woods" laments the loss of natural beauty to urban development and he equates the destruction of the woods where he once played with the loss of his own childhood innocence.

The poems that Layton, Dudek, and Souster published in Northern Review between 1946 and 1950 do not show significant signs of development when compared to their earlier work. They are still dependent upon associating themselves as poets with the humanistic social-realist tradition and with judging the function of poetry in terms of its ability to communicate with the average man. As Sutherland phrased their aims in the previously cited "Introduction" to Other Canadians: "They intend at least to speak to the average man of everyday realities and of the principles which operate in them. They are determined on principle not to ignore the harsh bustle of humanity." Although Northern Review published young writers whose poetry indicates that other attitudes toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet were developing by the end of the 1940's, the majority of work suggests that the social genre was still the most characteristic form of modern Canadian poetry during this period.

After the resignation of most of the editors of the magazine following Sutherland's review of Finch's Poems, the

fate of Northern Review was left largely in Sutherland's hands. His presence is evident in nearly every issue and it was he who controlled its contents and editorial policy. Sutherland's influence became increasingly dominant as the magazine continued and Northern Review changed as Sutherland's critical attitudes changed. By the early 1950's he had switched his critical position almost entirely from the radical socialist poetic he had advocated in the early Forties and had become a conservative reactionary. Thus, after the close of the 1940's, Northern Review published little avante garde poetry and was no longer representative of contemporary critical attitudes or poetic development.

The fact that Northern Review devoted relatively few pages to poetry in comparison to Preview and First Statement, however, also suggests that after 1946, poetic enthusiasm was waning. With the end of the war and the change in the political and social attitudes which accompanied the peace, much of the impetus which had motivated the young writers had disappeared. As a result, the poetry of Northern Review, with few exceptions, tends to repeat what had already been said and the ideas and poetic techniques present little that is new or exciting. A further indication of the lack of incentive which followed the war is the fact that by the time Other Canadians appeared in 1947, most of the poets Sutherland had included had stopped publishing. Contemporary Verse suffered from this lack of enthusiasm as well. Floris McLaren has indicated that during the late Forties and early Fifties

Crawley had difficulty finding material for the magazine and received a letter from Sutherland expressing his own similar problems with Northern Review.[125]

Nevertheless, a number of new shortlived and uninfluential magazines were established after Preview, First Statement, and Direction ceased publication. Elan and Reading appeared sporadically in Montreal as did Enterprise and Here and Now in Toronto. Here and Now, which published only four numbers between December 1947 and June 1949, was one of the more interesting of these ventures. Its policy was to establish a sophisticated Canadian literary periodical which would transcend the indifference that little magazines traditionally exhibited toward format, typesetting and paper. The magazine was too ambitious to be successful, as the total of four expensive and beautifully produced numbers attests. It was not only economic considerations, however, which caused the magazine to fail. The fact is that their literary ambitions were also out of step with the times. Their opening editorial expresses an idealism which proved to be unfounded:

> Ever since the nineties of the last century, [little magazines] have with varying degrees of popularity, presented the greatest writers and artists of the time. That Canada has played a relatively small part in this movement is the result less of its being a "young country" than of a preconceived notion that Canada does not possess enough avante garde writers and artists to warrant such publications. With the exception of Canadian Poetry Magazine and Contemporary Verse, two poetry magazines of a very high order, which have for many years been attempting to disprove this, there is no publication whose primary aim is to provide an outlet for the wide variety of Canadian Art that we know does exist.[126]

The fact that neither the Montreal magazines nor Northern Review (which had been in publication for a year) are mentioned

in the editorial is perhaps an indication that Catherine Harmon and Alan Brown, who were the editors, lacked contact with the literary milieu of the period. A further indication of this is the implication in the final editorial (June, 1949) that instead of finding a great deal of fresh writing which was worth publishing, the magazine found difficulty in receiving enough to keep it viable.

In addition to Here and Now and the other previously mentioned magazines, Impression (Winnipeg), Protocol (St. John's, Newfoundland), and Fiddlehead (Fredericton) could be added to the list. All of these were relatively uninfluential parochial ventures which were satisfied to publish the writers of their particular geographic area. Harold Horwood, who edited Protocol between 1945 and 1949, did publish a brief informative article entitled "Poetry in Newfoundland" in Northern Review III,5[127] and Sutherland included several contemporary Newfoundland poems, but Protocol itself remained a parochial magazine devoting most of its space to local names such as John Avalon, William Noble, and Charles O'Bourke Horwood. Similarly, until Fiddlehead changed its policy in 1953 it received little attention from writers outside the Fredericton vicinity.

Another factor which may have contributed to the apparent decline of poetic enthusiasm during the late Forties is that by 1946 most of the poets who had been active during the war years had succeeded in publishing books of their own. Layton's Here and Now, Anderson's A Tent For April, Overture

by F. R. Scott, and Green World by Miriam Waddington all appeared in 1945 and 1946 saw the publication of Souster's When We Are Young, As Ten As Twenty by P. K. Page, The White Centre by Patrick Anderson, as well as Louis Dudek's chapbook East Of The City. Along with other less prolific poets they had also published examples of their work in Unit Of 5 (1944) and Other Canadians (1947). It is probable that following these first publications the writers were less interested in the little magazines as outlets for their poetry. Most clearly, however, there was a need for a renewed incentive and a more specific direction than that afforded by the social-political poetic which had already sustained modern Canadian poetry for too long. It was Louis Dudek and Raymond Souster who took it upon themselves to initiate the necessary change and to attempt a re-definition of the function of poetry and the role of the poet in the 1950's.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter III

[1]Most of the better known poets published in the magazine between December 1937 and August 1941. The list includes: Anne Marriott, Leo Kennedy, Dorothy Livesay, Charles Bruce, Doris Ferne, Floris McLaren, Ralph Gustafson, P. K. Page, Margaret Avison, Kay Smith, and Earle Birney.

[2]P. K. Page, "Canadian Poetry 1942," Preview 8, p. 8.

[3]George Robertson, "Allan Crawley And Contemporary Verse," Canadian Literature, 41 (Summer 1969), 88.

[4]Floris McLaren, "Contemporary Verse, A Canadian Quarterly," Tamarack Review, 2 (Spring 1957), 55.

[5]Alan Crawley, "Editorial," Contemporary Verse, 1 (September 1941).

[6]McLaren, p. 57.

[7]McLaren, p. 59.

[8]Robertson, p. 91.

[9]Robertson, p. 87.

[10]Page, "Canadian Poetry 1942," p. 8.

[11]Editor's note, Contemporary Verse, 4 (June 1942), 3.

[12]McLaren, p. 60.

[13]Foreword, Contemporary Verse, 1 (September 1941), 2.

[14]Editorial, Preview, 1 (March 1942).

[15]Christopher Ringrose, "Preview: Anatomy Of A Group," Diss. University of Alberta 1969, p. 35.

[16]Ringrose, p. 41.

[17]Ringrose, p. 31.

[18]Earle Birney, "Advice To Anthologists: Some Rude

Reflections On Canadian Verse," Canadian Forum, 21 (February 1942), 338-340.

[19]Voices Of Victory (Toronto: Macmillan, 1941).

[20]A. M. Stephen, "Canadian Poets and Critics," New Frontier (September 1936), 20-23.

[21]Birney, Canadian Forum, p. 338.

[22]F. R. Scott, "A Note On Canadian War Poetry," Preview, 9. Reprinted in The Making Of Modern Poetry In Canada, Dudek and Gnarowski, eds. (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), p. 97.

[23]Scott, p. 98.

[24]Scott, p. 98.

[25]Scott, p. 100.

[26]Scott, p. 100.

[27]Neufville Shaw, "The Maple Leaf Is Dying," Preview, 17 (December 1943). Reprinted in The Making Of Modern Poetry In Canada, Dudek and Gnarowski, eds. (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), p. 102.

[28]Shaw, p. 103.

[29]Shaw, p. 104.

[30]Dorothy Livesay, review of four Ryerson Chapbooks, Contemporary Verse, 8 (June 1943), 13-14.

[31]Livesay, p. 14.

[32]Ringrose, p. 22.

[33]Ringrose, p. 25.

[34]Patrick Anderson, "Stephen Spender And The Tragic Sense," Preview 7.

[35]P. K. Page, Preview 8, p. 8.

[36]Neufville Shaw, "Wasteland," Preview 8, pp. 9-10.

[37]Shaw, p. 9.

[38]Patrick Anderson, Preview 21, p. 3.

[39]Ringrose, pp. 65-66.

[40]Ringrose, p. 66.

[41]Ringrose, p. 102.

[42]Ringrose, p. 90.

[43]Ringrose, p. 104.

[44]Ringrose is somewhat hesitant about Scott's position with regard to the Preview group noting that the magazine was not the centre of his interest as it was for the other younger members. The magazine was rather "one stage in his energetic sponsorship of Canadian literary magazines and groups." (p. 87)

[45]Unsigned letter to the editor, Contemporary Verse, 8 (June 1943), 14.

[46]Unsigned letter to the editor, Contemporary Verse, 8 (June 1943), 15.

[47]Ringrose, p. 13.

[48]Editorial, First Statement, 1, No. 1 (September 1942).

[49]Editorial, First Statement, 1, No. 3 (undated).

[50]John Sutherland, "The Role Of The Magazines," First Statement, 1, No. 15 (March 1943).

[51]John Sutherland, "P. K. Page and Preview," First Statement, 1, No. 6, p. 7.

[52]Editorial, First Statement, 1, No. 13.

[53]John Sutherland, "Crucible's Standard of Poetry," First Statement, 1, No. 15 (March 1943), 10.

[54]Editorial, First Statement, 2, No. 1 (August 1943).

[55]Editorial, "Three New Poets," First Statement, 1, No. 12, pp. 3-4.

[56]"Three New Poets," p. 2.

[57]"Three New Poets," pp. 3-4.

[58]John Sutherland, "Earle Birney's David," First Statement, 1, No. 9, pp. 6-8.

[59]John Sutherland, "A Note On The Metaphor," First Statement, 2, No. 4, pp. 9-10.

[60]Louis Dudek, "Poets of Revolt . . . Or Reaction?" First Statement, 1, No. 20, pp. 3-6.

[61]Dudek, p. 3.

[62]Dudek, p. 3.

[63]Dudek, p. 6.

[64]Louis Dudek, "Academic Literature," First Statement, 2, No. 8 (August 1944), 18.

[65]Dudek, p. 19.

[66]Louis Dudek, "Geography, Poetry and Politics," First Statement, 1, No. 16, p. 3.

[67]Dudek, p. 3.

[68]Particularly Martin Ellis, "The Teheran Line," First Statement, 2 (October-November 1944), 17-20, which outlined the aims of the Labour Progressive Party.

[69]Robert Campbell, "Raymond Souster's Direction, Contact, and Combustion," Diss. University of New Brunswick 1969, p. 27.

[70]Editorial, First Statement, 2, No. 8 (August 1944).

[71]Campbell, p. 73.

[72]Irving Layton, "Politics And Poetry," First Statement, 2, No. 1 (August 1943), 17.

[73]Layton, p. 20.

[74]Layton, p. 19.

[75]Editorial, First Statement, 2, No. 6 (April 1944).

[76]Editorial, "Literary Colonialism," First Statement, 2, No. 4 (February 1944).

[77]Quoted by Sutherland in "Mr. Smith and The Tradition," introduction to Other Canadians: An Anthology Of The New Poetry In Canada 1940-1946 (Montreal: First Statement Press, 1947), p. 5.

[78]Sutherland, "Literary Colonialism."

[79]Eli Mandel, ed., Contexts Of Canadian Criticism (Chicago, 1971), p. 11.

[80]Mandel, p. 11.

[81]"April" appeared as "Returning With An Annual Passion" in Other Canadians. Although Layton made only minor changes in the actual language of the poem, the line structure is radically altered. In the later version he relies less upon enjumbment and more upon making each line a complete statement.

[82]Patrick Waddington, First Statement, 1, No. 16, pp. 5-7.

[83]Ronald Hambleton, ed., Unit Of 5 (Toronto, 1944).

[84]John Frederick Nims, "Five Young Canadian Poets," Poetry (Chicago), No. 5 (1944), 335.

[85]Louis Dudek, letter quoted by Alan Crawley, Contemporary Verse, 23 (Winter 1947-48), 21.

[86]Louis Dudek, "The Transition In Canadian Poetry," Culture, 20 (1959), 294-295.

[87]Raymond Souster, Go To Sleep, World (Toronto: Ryerson 1947).

[88]John Sutherland, "Introduction," Other Canadians (Montreal, 1947), p. 19.

[89]Raymond Souster, Editorial letter, Direction, 1 (November 1943).

[90]Raymond Souster, "The Present State Of Canadian Literature," Direction, 1, p. 2.

[91]Raymond Souster, "A Debt," Direction 2, p. 1.

[92]Campbell, p. 44.

[93]Souster, "A Debt," p. 1.

[94]Souster, p. 1.

[95]Raymond Souster, "A Letter From The Other Side Of The Fence," Direction 6, p. 8.

[96]"A Further Note From The Editors Of Direction," Direction 7, p. 13.

[97]John Sutherland, "Great Things And Terrible," Direction 9, pp. 2-5.

[98]For a complete list of poems, stories, and articles published in Direction see: An Index To Direction, Michael Gnarowski, ed. (Quebec City, 1965).

[99]In a letter to the author, January 1972.

[100]Michael Gnarowski, "An Introductory Note," An Index To Direction (Quebec City, 1965), p. 6.

[101]"Northern Review: A Welcome," Direction 9.

[102]Ringrose, pp. 109-110 .

[103]Ringrose, p. 109.

[104]John Sutherland, "Editorial," Northern Review, 1, No. 1 (December-January 1945-46).

[105]"The Poetry of P. K. Page," Northern Review, 1, No. 4 (December-January 1947); "On Klein's The Rocking Chair," Northern Review, 2, No. 6 (August-September 1949); review of Reaney's The Red Heart, "Canadian Comment," Northern Review, 3, No. 4 (April-May 1950).

[106]"Notices of Resignation," Northern Review, 2, No. 1 (October-November 1947).

[107]Sutherland, "Canadian Comment," (review of L. A. Mackay) Northern Review, 2, No. 2 (January-February 1949), pp. 32-37.

[108]Sutherland, review of Mackay, p. 32.

[109]Sutherland, p. 33.

[110]Sutherland, p. 33.

[111]Sutherland, pp. 36-37.

[112]Editorial, Northern Review, 2, No. 1 (October-November 1949), 2.

[113]Northrop Frye, "Canada And Its Poetry," Canadian Forum, 23 (December 1943), 207-210.

[114]John Sutherland, "Old Dog Trait: An Extended Analysis," Contemporary Verse, 29 (Fall, 1949), 18-19.

[115]Sutherland, p. 19.

[116]John Sutherland, "Canadian Comment," (review of Reaney's The Red Heart And Other Poems), Northern Review, 3, No. 4 (April-May 1950), 36.

[117]Sutherland, "Introduction" to Other Canadians (Montreal, 1947), 12-13.

[118]Sutherland, Other Canadians, p. 14.

[119]Other Canadians, p. 15.

[120]Other Canadians, p. 15.

[121]Also pointed out by Campbell, p. 74.

[122]Other Canadians, p. 15.

[123]Other Canadians, p. 17.

[124]Other Canadians, p. 18.

[125]Floris McLaren, "Contemporary Verse: A Canadian Quarterly," Tamarack Review, 3 (Spring 1957), 61.

[126]Editorial, Here And Now, 1, No. 1 (December 1947).

[127]Harold Horwood, "Poetry in Newfoundland," Northern Review, 3, No. 5 (July 1950), 11-13.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAGAZINES OF THE FIFTIES: MAKING IT NEW

In the January 1951 issue of Northern Review John Sutherland presented his assessment of the development of Canadian poetry during the Forties in an article entitled "The Past Decade In Canadian Poetry." It is an important article because of its concern with differentiating the poetic of the Forties from that of the Thirties and with indicating the new direction that Sutherland saw poetry taking as the 1950's began. It also provides a clear indication of Sutherland's increasingly conservative attitude toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet. Repeating the observations he had made earlier in the "introduction" to Other Canadians, Sutherland described the poets of the Thirties as "essentially pragmatic in their outlook, prepared to adopt a cause and devote their talents directly to its realization."[1] The poets of the Forties differed in that they "saw the contemporary world in psychological as well as political terms, and relied as much on Freud as Marx."[2] The political incentive, however, was still a major force behind the poetic enthusiasm of the early Forties and Sutherland concludes that one of the reasons the movement lost momentum after the war was because it had lost its political faith. Although many of the poets of the early Forties had stopped publishing after 1945, Sutherland noted a change in emphasis in the work of those who continued

to write. This he sees as a tendency toward introspection and a "soul-searching which has strong religious implications."[3] The political motivation was gradually being replaced by a religious one associated with post-war guilt:

> In their writing they no longer attribute the present state of the world to class oppression, but to a guilt which makes no class distinctions and which involves every individual, including the poet. They speak now in a more personal way, exhibit a willingness to bear their share of universal guilt, and seem to imply that the puritanical fury with which they once attacked the "middle class" was really a blustering way of hiding their own feeling of guilt. They look back to the poetic traditions, strive for a greater simplicity, and try to sing rather than bluster forth protests.[4]

Sutherland, who was becoming more personally involved with Catholicism, was to some extent imposing religious implications upon Canadian post-war poetry and placing more emphasis upon the religious aspect than was justified. The poetry which appeared in Northern Review and Contemporary Verse during the late Forties is not, as a whole, marked by a significant degree of religious content although there are numerous poems which contain expressions of guilt. There are, of course, individual poems which conform to Sutherland's view (he refers to Kay Smith's "Footnote To The Lord's Prayer" and quotes from P. K. Page) but his undue emphasis upon the increased poetic concern with religion is both a reflection of the change which was taking place in his own personal philosophy and an indication of the more generalized wish to show that the development of Canadian poetry was not at a standstill. Sutherland is correct in observing an increasing tendency toward introspection and "soul-searching" and a decreasing poetic interest in the subject matter of political

and social reform but his equation of these changes with an important new religious motivation is a step which cannot validly be taken. He does in fact modify his position by finally suggesting that: "It would be misleading to conclude . . . that we have harvested a new crop of "religious poets," but there is certainly a marked religious tendency in most recent work."[5]

Sutherland was also attracted to the religious aspect of poetry because by 1950 his critical stance had shifted to the extent that he was losing his belief in the principles of the social-realist poetic which he helped establish in the early Forties. Even though he considered the poetry which was being written at the end of the decade to be inferior to that written during the war, he nevertheless saw it as a better model for future writing because religious beliefs and traditional forms embodied poetic principles which were potentially superior to those inherent in poetry based upon worldly experience and experimental techniques. Sutherland's concluding guidelines for poets and poetry are very similar to those he advanced earlier in First Statement but have a significant change in emphasis:

> It is generally better for the poet to accept than oppose the values inherent in his society; it is better for him to be honestly himself than to disguise himself in a big abstraction- political or religious; it is better for him to aim at simplicity, than to perpetuate the obscurity which is gradually killing off the respect for poetry in the minds of intelligent readers; and it is better for him to use and not oppose the traditions of poetry- and for the Canadian poet not to completely ignore his relation to the tradition of poetry in Canada . . . The question is whether the poet can find a new point of stability, rediscover the basic moral and religious values of our society, and by so doing achieve these results.[6]

The First Statement writers had also pointed out the need for poets to accept their social environment (in the tradition of Whitman and Sandburg) rather that constantly criticizing it as the poets of the Thirties had done. Here, however, Sutherland has changed the emphasis from an acceptance of social reality to a rediscovery and acceptance of "basic moral and religious values" inherent in society. Rather than being an avante-garde iconoclast, Sutherland's new ideal poet is an artist who is concerned with expressing moral and religious issues in traditional forms. By 1953 Sutherland had moved far enough in his reaction against modernism to see the right wing Catholicism of Roy Campbell as an embodiment of his poetic ideals: "How superior is the vision of Mr. Campbell, with his incarnational view of reality, to the vision of the poet under the cloud of eschatology! The unabashed Christian is far more alive than the mere temperer with Christianity . . . Mr. Campbell is a poet- it is his business to teach and communicate."[7] In Northern Review VI,4 (October -November 1953), Sutherland made his split with his contemporaries final in an article entitled "The Great Equestrians" which advocated a return to the poetic principles of Roy Campbell, G. K. Chesterson, D. H. Lawrence, and C. S. Lewis. For him there is no longer "the slightest doubt that modern literary decadence is now on its death-bed. All that was fostered by Joyce and Pound is obviously on the verge of complete extinction."[8] The article also shows that Sutherland's critical style had undergone a change. Rather than the well

reasoned, well researched textual criticism he had so strongly advocated in the early issues of the magazine, "The Great Equestrians"is based upon quasi-philosophical rhetoric, chop-logic, and artistic value judgements which stem from religious belief rather than literature. When Sutherland's earlier articles on James Reaney and L. A. MacKay are recalled, the following example is particularly illuminating despite its being taken out of context:

> To be non-equine is to be non-human: we then reverse the whole procedure, and, as the moderns have been doing for a generation, proceed to make the mirror a mind. The mentalizing of the mirror is a cumulative process; it has gone on in seemingly endless fashion in literally thousands of poems in which the light of the mirror shines like the intelligence of the sun-divinity, symbol of our divorced condition and our brazen claim to god head in despite of God. And of course the mentallizing of the mirror is the atomizing and destruction of the mind. The mind shatters into a thousand pieces at one touch from that flashing ascendancy, the demon in the glass.[9]

Besides his interest in the moral poetic principles of Chesterton, Campbell, C. S. Lewis, and D. H. Lawrence, Sutherland was also becoming hesitant about the importance of modern British and European literary influences upon Canadian poetry. His increasingly conservative and reactionary critical stance was accompanied by a vigorous new literary nationalism. As early as 1949 the following quotation from Lorne Pierce began to appear regularly on the back cover of the magazine: "No nation can achieve its true destiny that adopts without profound and courageous reasoning and selection the thoughts and styles of others."[10] It was specifically against this return to the promotion of literary Canadianism that the first opposition to Sutherland's conservatism arose. In the May,

1951 issue of Northern Review Sutherland published an article which condemned Archibald Lampman for being a poor imitator of Poe and at the same time implied that Canadian artists generally were too anxious to imitate foreign models.[11] In the following issue Louis Dudek attacked Sutherland and the reactionary policies of Northern Review in a letter to the editor:

> This has been the direction of criticism in Northern Review for some time. I think that even at this late date the magazine should open its pages for a thorough discussion of the underlying issues of this critical stand. Is the indebtedness of Canadian writers to other artists in the past and present a sort of crime for which they can be placed in the stocks? We would question the critical laws by which we are to be condemned. After all, indebtedness to other writers, properly acknowledged, or unconcealed, could be considered a merit. It reveals a capacity to learn . . . I would state the proposition, in contrast to Northern Review policy at present, that there can be no good poet, no poet who can improve after his personal (and probably most imitative) effort, who does not absorb and learn his trade from other poets. The method, whether deliberate or spontaneous, is imitation. If the poet has any individuality in him, he cannot lose it.[12]

While Sutherland was narrowing his view of poetry and the poet, writers like Dudek (speaking for Souster and Layton among others) were attempting to widen their poetic horizons by relating modern Canadian poetry to the context of world literature. They were, in fact, looking for new influences and new sources of inspiration at the very time that Sutherland was turning his back upon them. Dudek's discovery of Ezra Pound as an international artist and man of letters can be seen as a significant event which illustrates the distance that had finally come between Sutherland and his colleagues as well as the new direction that Canadian poetry was taking.

Whereas Sutherland considered the modernist tradition fostered by Pound and Joyce to have resulted in aimless decadence, Dudek and his contemporaries considered it to be a source of fresh inspiration for poetry. Concluding his letter, Dudek remarks:

> . . . I am not saying anything original. It has been said a hundred times by the principal poet of our time, whom I consider Ezra Pound to be, and from whom I have derived it . . . what Canadian poets need is not criticism of their assimilative methods (in fact, there is not enough assimilation), but a sense of participation, at least the opportunity of talking and thinking about poetry which they can share with one another and with poets outside.[13]

Dudek encouraged Raymond Souster to criticize Sutherland's point of view in a private letter dated June 7, 1951 and at the same time explained his own objections in further detail:

> Hope you will see my letter to the Editors in the current NR [Northern Review]. My general idea is to get this subject talked up a little, since it has been bothering me a long time- ever since John started talking Canadianism and nativism. What's your opinion.. . . Here's your chance to tell 'em what's wrong with the mag, how you see the "decline" of the last few years, etc. You have written that NR isn't what it was, that its gone in for conventional smoothness, lacks the old biff-bam of the war years. Why do you think that happened? My theory is that looking for "native quality" just shuts the eyes to what is new and interesting and alive, who in hell cares whether its native or not? And do we want to be natives forever?[14]

In keeping with this anti-nativist poetic, Louis Dudek, who had been living in New York since 1946, urged Souster to become familiar with contemporary American and English poets. Sutherland's search for a new definition of the function of poetry and the role of the poet had led him toward a religious orientation and a return to orthodox literary principles based upon nationalistic cultural awareness. Dudek and Souster, although not at all sure of what

their "vital direction" would be, knew that it was not the same one that Sutherland had taken and by 1952 Dudek could observe: "It looks like the end of the NR decade. He's like a mammoth walking into the bog and sinking."[15] What Dudek and Souster wanted was a wider orientation for Canadian poetry and a new progressive context in which it could be understood and discussed. As early as June of 1951 Souster had proposed to Dudek that a new magazine was necessary to oppose the restrictive attitudes that Northern Review and Contemporary Verse had come to represent:.

> I think you are probably as fed up with Contemporary Verse and Northern Review as I am, and I know there are plenty of others who feel the same way. If we are going to move on something will have to take their place. We need an outlet for experiment and a franker discussion of the direction poetry is to take . . . What we need is in short a poetry mag with daring and a little less precious attitude.[16]

These remarks confirm the growing disillusionment with the policy of the established publications and contain the germinal idea for what would soon become Contact magazine. The attitude toward the role of the poet and the function of poetry that the magazine would embody, however, had yet to be discovered. The only thing certain was that they would be in opposition to Sutherland and Alan Crawley.

In a letter to Souster dated July 17, 1951 Louis Dudek expresses three significant points with regard to the current poetic milieu. His directing Souster toward the work of contemporary American and British poets marks the crystallization of Souster's interest in the canon of international modern poetry and portends the future editorial direction of

Contact. Ironically, Dudek's own critical attitude toward the poetry he recommends places him from the beginning on the periphery of the spheres of influence he was seeking to establish. The third point made clear in the letter is that by this time Dudek was consciously seeking a new context in which Canadian poetry could be developed even though he was not sure what it would be:

> Have you seen 1) Mid Century American Poets and 2) New British Poets (Rexroth, New Directions)? I mention these not because I think they can do anybody any good- I am in fact opposed to the general trend of "romanticism" in England, and of apple-polishing in America . . . We've got to get back to the roots of modern poetry, the thing that made it live in the first place- so these books do not have the influence, or direction we need; they're good to know about, perhaps to react against. What the vital direction for us will be, that is the question. I hope that by a meeting of minds, since everybody has some half-notions on the subject, some common conception may be distilled.[17]

Dudek's concern with getting "back to the roots of modern poetry" in effect meant returning to the poetic principles of Ezra Pound who had become for him the most important modern literary figure.[18] In the many letters exchanged between Dudek and Souster during 1951-52, Dudek's references to Pound are frequent and he constantly attempts to arouse Souster's interest in him. Souster, however, was more attracted by contemporary avante-garde writers such as Cid Corman, Robert Creeley, and Charles Olson who had developed their own styles from theories established by Pound and William Carlos Williams. Although he had introduced Souster to them, Dudek never gained a genuine appreciation for these younger writers and this difference in literary preference separated the critical thinking of Souster and Dudek during the early

Fifties even though both agreed upon the importance of drawing Canadian poetry into the mainstream of the contemporary international literary environment. Their correspondence indicates that since Northern Review and Contemporary Verse no longer represented what was new and exciting in Canadian poetry, there was no alternative but to establish another magazine which would suit their purposes. The time for a change had arrived and Souster in particular was very anxious to make sure that the change would be in the direction of what was new and experimental. This, however, did not mean that they were anxious to see Northern Review and Contemporary Verse disappear. They appreciated the important role these magazines had played in the development of modern Canadian poetry and although they saw a need for other more daring and vigorous publications, they felt that the older magazines could continue to perform a valuable service. Dudek, for example, was at first very reluctant to accept Souster's suggestion that a magazine be established in opposition to Northern Review because he felt that such an action implied disloyalty to John Sutherland: "You are of course right as to what we need; but the time is not yet to start a new magazine. John has done a helluva lot, and is still doing it. It would be a crime for us to sink his ship after he has pulled alone for so long."[19]

Similarly, when Alan Crawley announced the termination of Contemporary Verse in the fall of 1952, a group of poets

in Montreal sent a telegram encouraging him to continue the magazine and their argument was more forcefully advanced in a letter from Louis Dudek:

> That telegram from F. R. Scott's home came with or went with a true concern for CV and a desire to make you realize how important we think it is. A few hundred readers? Say it were ten. Ten maybe the node of life in the midst of an organism, one of the small live cells. Literature is that important . . . Trying to pray the ghost back into the body. An impossible undertaking? At any rate one has no right to give up.[20]

The fact that Dudek takes this attitude toward Northern Review and Contemporary Verse suggests that he felt they should change their policies and re-generate the liberal spirit in which they were originally conceived rather than cease publication. In the spring of 1952 he again had written to Souster about their lack of vitality: "Alan Crawley writes me a long dull discouraging letter. I realize he's more like J S [John Sutherland] than anybody around here, and he's been handing out this discouraging line since I've known him. That dear old boy needs a kick in the pants, or a prod in a kind way, to bring him to life."[21] The protests, however, were to no avail. Crawley had already decided to end Contemporary Verse and Sutherland continued to restrict the editorial scope of Northern Review to such an extent that avante-garde poetry by younger unestablished writers virtually ceased to appear in its pages. Thus, Raymond Souster decided to begin Contact magazine in order to provide the necessary outlet for the new poetry and ideas which were beginning to develop. It is interesting to note that Souster was finally

led to his decision not by Dudek or by his disillusionment with the reactionary critical attitudes of the established magazines, but by the news that the Labor Progressive Party was planning to publish a literary-cultural periodical entitled New Frontiers. He wrote to Dudek about his plans in October of 1951:

> Remember we talked a little in one of our letters about the wisdom of new little magazines in Canada at this time? You thought that the time wasn't ripe, as you said that John should be given every chance without any other opposition. At the time I agreed with you, but events of the past couple of months have changed my mind. Biggest factor is the forthcoming publication of the L.P.P. called New Frontiers. This will leave no other literary mag in Toronto, and I think that just isn't good enough. There must be some other publication even if its only a token gesture. Therefore we plan to bring out the first issue . . . of . . . Contact in February. We want to feature translations, experimental writing from Canada and the U.S.A., the odd poetry review, the emphasis on vigor and excitement. MAKE IT NEW is our unofficial slogan.[22]

New Frontiers, edited by Margaret Fairley, appeared in the winter of 1952 and continued through nineteen issues until the summer of 1956. It was an expensive and well produced magazine inspired by the progressive left wing political and cultural attitudes first promoted by it's distant ancestor, New Frontier, in 1936. For this reason alone it is easy to understand why Souster responded as he did toward it. Both he and Dudek saw themselves surrounded by reactionary conservatism and literary nationalism on every side. Already unable to cope with Sutherland's increasingly restrictive point of view, the imminent publication of a magazine based upon long outmoded Marxist literary theory must certainly have appeared the final straw. When the first

number of New Frontiers did appear, Souster's fears were borne out. Its slogan read: "For a Canadian People's Party in a world at peace," and the first issue contained a long editorial by Margaret Fairley entitled "Our Cultural Heritage" which spelled out its nationalistic intentions and promoted the poetry of J. S. Wallace as follows: "[he] writes about and for the people. He expresses the struggle and hopes of the working class in language clear and moving. In emotional power he is the finest poet Canada has yet produced."[23] This return to the socialist poetic of the Thirties coupled with the apathy of Contemporary Verse and the orthodoxy of Northern Review was ample reason for Souster's decision to create Contact under Pound's dictum of "make it new."

i Contact Magazine

Louis Dudek contributed "Où Sont Les Jeunes?" as the opening editorial to Contact which was first published in January of 1952. The questioning tone of the article suggests that he and Souster were still searching for a clearly defined editorial policy and critical position regarding the function of poetry and the role of the poet. Most generally, they were concerned with recreating enthusiasm for poetry and inspiring young writers to begin anew. Both as poets and as critics, they saw themselves as literary activists and they viewed the magazine as a workshop in which new ideas could be explored and new poetic techniques demon-

strated before whatever audience existed at the time. Dudek's first paragraph captures this spirit well:

> Poetry in Canada needs a new start. To the young, the field is wide open. Our younger poets are getting grey about the temples. The work of the forties is by now old and yellow: it was a good beginning, but not yet the real thing. There is now a ready audience for any young writer with something fresh and bouncing to say, someone with a new technique, a vision, or a gift for making art out of the matters of fact. But where are the young? Where is the "new" generation?[24]

Dudek also offered some specific suggestions regarding the most favorable qualities for which young writers should strive. These included the avoidance of abstractions, the use of concrete images, enthusiastic tone, and sound thinking. The poet who could fuse all of these qualities into a vital poetry would, perhaps, provide assurance that the ideal Canadian poet, "professional (in craftsmanship, not cash) [and] . . . dedicated to his art"[25] might some day emerge. Dudek's thinking here is influenced by his current interest in the literary theory of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams. His statement that modern poetry "aims at making the major integration of life," for example, is a rephrasing of Williams' proposal that poetry functions to "reconcile / the people and the stones."[26] Similarly, Dudek's rejection of the "ornamental" function of poetry in favor of poetry which derives meaning from concrete subject matter is also reminiscent of Williams' point of view. As Dudek phrases it: "The death of poetry is its reduction to a purely ornamental, or 'cultural' function; we must scrap the ornament and come back to the meaning."[27] This observation is significant too as a foreshadowing of the attitude toward poetry that led

Dudek to establish Delta in 1957. By then he had come to the conclusion that the extreme experimentalism of American writers and the growing interest in the poetic use of myths and archetypes in Canada had all but destroyed the relationship between poetry and meaning. Thus, one of the important aims of Delta was the attempt to foster an interest in poetry which emphasized meaning in much the same manner as prose.[28] In the present context, however, Dudek's statements in "Où Sont les Jeunes?" are significant because they establish the vigorous editorial tone of Contact and suggest that although still tentative, the poetic principles on which the magazine was based owed a great deal to Dudek's familiarity with Pound and Williams whose writing, for him, embodied the roots of modern poetry. Gnarowski notes that while Souster was preparing the first issue of the magazine in December of 1951: "Dudek wrote a four-page letter which had more than passing influence on the shape that Contact would take. Dudek, who was in close touch with Ezra Pound at the time, had just received a letter from Ez, and he felt that Pound had spelled out what Contact should try to do."[29] Pound's letter simply suggested that a little magazine is of most value when it directs specific critical attention at individual writers and pointed out that poetry could only develop if errors in style and thinking were observed and corrected. In his letter to Souster, Dudek quoted much of what Pound had said and proposed in this spirit to write the critical evaluation of several current American magazines which appeared in the second issue

of Contact. It was in this same spirit of critical appraisal and forceful evaluation of the state of the contemporary literary environment that Dudek, Souster, and Layton composed their prefaces to their joint collection Cerberus, which was the first publication of Contact Press.

The idea for Contact Press was conceived almost simultaneously with the idea for Contact magazine. Although they had discussed the book publishing venture previously, Dudek suggested the name Contact Press to Souster in a letter of March 18, 1952[30] and on March 22, wrote to ask him for his preface to the proposed Cerberus: "Can you sit down tonight and bat out a page of preface for your part of it? Irving [Layton] has written several pages for his- too much but good- cursing the genteel culch in Canada and JS [Sutherland] without naming him."[31] Because of the close relationship between the aims of Contact Press and Contact magazine, the Cerberus prefaces can be seen as the first formal attempts on the part of the writers concerned to redefine their attitudes toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet. Thus the prefaces relate not only to the poems which appeared in the collection but also to the whole critical rationale behind Contact magazine and the revolt against literary conservatism and timidity which fostered it.

The prefaces of Dudek and Layton agree precisely with regard to their understanding of the function of poetry. Both see poetry as a creation of the imagination which, because it gives order and beauty to life, holds great potential as a

force against the modern industrial, commercial, and political pressures that encroach upon human freedom. In a world fallen to the philistines, poetry provides the possibility of redemption. In Dudek's words:

> Poetry cannot change the world in a day, the world of wars, oppressions and mob-suicide which men have proposed for themselves. But in the end, only poetry, imagination, can do so. Actuality itself is a metaphor made of iron, the diseased poem which man has erected out of mass frustration, out of centuries of evil. Poetry, therefore, opposed to this, has power, immense power for good, because that is the true poem, the epic all men would live if they were free.[32]

Layton is more concerned with the negative cultural influences of gentility and respectability and in this he is voicing much the same attitude that he expressed ten years earlier in First Statement. His general point of view, however, is the same as Dudek's: "What brings us together in Cerberus is the belief that to write poetry is to say a loud nix to the forces high-pressuring us into conformity or atomic dispersion. Also, that the best part of any man today is the hell he carries inside him; and that only poetry can transmute that into freedom, love, intelligence."[33] Thus, both writers argue for the integrity of poetry as a humanizing art with important practical social implications. Their corollary observations are of interest as well. Dudek sees language itself as "the great, saving first poem," and stresses the necessity of preserving it from the ravages of advertising men and journalists who would destroy and pervert its sanctity. This is an attitude toward language which later becomes an important part of the critical perspective of CIV/n magazine which Dudek became involved with in 1953. Layton's corollary

observations, on the other hand, deal with Sutherland's view that poetry underwent a profound decline in Canada after 1945. He suggests that the problem was with the editors who refused to publish the poetry that was being written rather than with the poets' unwillingness to write it and he offers the poems of Cerberus as an indication of what was actually being done during the period.

Despite their aggressive, polemical tone, however, Dudek and Layton do not specifically describe the direction that they wanted poetry to take. Their attitude toward the social and cultural function of poetry as a means by which true human values might be redeemed from an environment of prudish gentility and commercial enterprise is certainly not new, nor does it necessarily have specific application to their contemporary milieu. Raymond Souster's preface, although brief and less ambitious than the other two, tells the reader exactly where he thinks the most significant roots of the new poetry are to be found:

> S. [Souster] has been dissatisfied for a long time with existing forms, feeling bound within them, mummified. But up to a year ago didn't have a clue. Now he's been shown the signs of an opening, a possible right road for the future. It starts somewhere in the Cantos of Ezra Pound and goes on to Charles Olson. You've heard of Ez: never mind too much about Olson, he'll come to the top soon enough; you can't keep talent like he has down. His basic idea, Composition by Field, as opposed to inherited line, may well start a revolution in English poetry.[34]

Thus, in the prefaces to Cerberus Dudek and Layton provided the poetic philosophy for the "new" poetry of the Fifties and Souster indicated the American sources from which it would draw inspiration. Significantly, and inevitably these were

the sources that eventually became the most important influences upon the editorial policy of Contact magazine. Dudek's part in bringing the aesthetics of Ezra Pound to Souster's attention has already been noted but more important than this (and more significant in terms of Contact) was his suggestion in a letter of December 1951, that Souster contact Cid Corman who had recently established the subsequently influential magazine, Origin.[35] When the first issue of Contact was published Souster sent Corman a copy and asked him if he could suggest poets who would be interested in contributing to the magazine. Corman replied that he would "push towards you all those whose work seems . . . worth consideration"[36] and from then on the international (and particularly American) editorial policy of Contact was firmly established. The second issue of the magazine included a cover page explanation of the title, associating it with the magazine of the same name edited by William Carlos Williams and Robert McAlmon in 1920-23. Souster wrote to Dudek about his enthusiasm for understanding poetry in an international context and in his reply Dudek provided the definitive statement of the rationale on which the magazine was finally based:

> Right, right, international poetry and ideas. Layton is all for this also. I begin to see the activity of the mind, intellectuals, poets, good writers, as just one world, a community of our time, to be understood in terms of geography nationality, race, religion, but having more in common than difference, different aspects that can refresh and complement one another. I don't mean just random translations in a magazine can do it. But genuine understanding of what goes on there. Thorough reading in other people's literatures, politics, problems, so that the "gists and piths" can be expressed for our readers in the mag, and understanding can result. Let's not assume that we as editors know everything,

or anything. We'll be working towards it. There is NO writer who NOW knows what we want to know; the community has not been created. We work to create a world community. This is what will happen, what the world needs in the next hundred years, or ruin. Its a job for ten years at least, for us. Let's call it the work of the fifties.[37]

After Contact 2 had appeared, it seems that Souster took seriously Dudek's advice not to worry "about the shortage of Canucks." Dudek had responded favorably with regard to the contents of Contact 2 but Corman had been sharply critical of the first two issues finding most of the poems "amateurish."[38] As a result, with Contact 3 Souster began including fewer and fewer Canadian poets and relied largely upon poems and translations by writers who were also being published in Origin. As Souster's correspondence with Cid Corman increased (there are approximately 200 letters from Corman to Souster in the Lakehead collection), Louis Dudek became a less influential advisor. Souster had found the type of content that he had been seeking for Contact and just prior to the publication of the third issue he wrote to John Sutherland asking him to "judge Contact by the June issue, and not the two that have appeared." Sutherland's criticism of the first two issues had prompted Souster's reply and his remarks in the letter conveniently provide both a statement of the editorial policy of Contact and a final summary of his attitude toward Northern Review:

As for Contact, it will probably continue to print poems which you consider are unfinished, unpolished. That will be because we consider it more important to print work that is exciting and new, even though unfinished, than to print polished stuff which gives off only polish. Young poets are almost cancelled from Northern Review, if you look for work that is finished and polished. That is the way we see it, anyway. And it is

from the young that poetry must grow.[39]

In his article, "Contact Looks At The Little Magazines," which appeared in Contact 2, Dudek stated the "workshop" function of the magazine that is implicit in Souster's letter to Sutherland. "The little mag," Dudek suggested, "is to contemporary literature what the coffee house was to literature of Queen Anne's time, the salon in France: it's where we get together, where the new work appears and gets its first understanding and encouragement."[40] This attitude indicates that Contact's critical policy had to be malleable and dynamic in order to accomodate the various examples of experimental poetry translations, and work in progress that it hoped to publish. Always primarily concerned with introducing its readers to new poetry, the magazine published very few detailed critical articles. With the third issue, however, the critical commentary that did appear was almost entirely devoted to the new ideas that Souster was assimilating from Cid Corman and Robert Creeley regarding the manner in which modern poetry could be rejuvenated. Writers like Creeley, Charles Olson, and Paul Blackburn, all of whom were associated with Origin, demonstrated for Souster the way in which the poetic principles of Ezra Pound could be given contemporary application. As a rephrasing of the remarks made in his preface to Cerberus, Souster acknowledged his agreement with Corman regarding the importance of Charles Olson by printing Corman's "A Note On Origin" as the keynote editorial to Contact 3:

Olson is the key figure in this re-sourcing of critical effort. His distinction lies in his having assimilated the richest of Pound's and Cummings' achievement and then adding his personal intelligence, a most penetrating and widespread intelligence, to a driving passionate voice. He has recognized that poetry derives from the speech we use; that that is most articulate strategy.[41]

Contact, like Origin, was interested in the literary aesthetics of Pound rather than in Pound's political or economic ideas and it was Olson who best understood and implemented his dictum. In Contact 5 Dudek warned against the corruption of what was worthwhile in Pound by poets who had taken up his philosophy too completely and had become fanatics mistaking poetic enthusiasm and chaotic experimentation for true art and a Fascist, racist ideology for true politics. Dudek saw evidence of this corruption in the American magazine Intro, describing it as a product of "Poundists on the loose" whose thinking "should be carefully distinguished from those who want to get at the sound core of Pound's life and work."[42]

Thus, unlike the little Canadian magazines which preceded it, Contact was more concerned with the function of poetry as art; as a dynamic construct made by a specific craft and technique rather than as a vehicle for expressing human compassion, social realism, or political philosophy. One of the most important critical attitudes fostered by Contact was the contention that poetry should be discussed in terms of itself and not in terms of social phenomena or religious beliefs which were external to it. It is significant in this regard that the longest and most detailed piece of criticism to appear in the magazine was Robert Creeley's

"A Note On Poetry" which Souster published in Contact 6. The article is, in fact, an excerpt from one of a number of letters that Souster exchanged with Creeley concerning contemporary literary theory. It deals with Olson's notion of composition by field and provides a rather concise explanation of the criteria of poetic judgement that Contact and the Olson-Creeley-Corman group were promoting. Unlike most other articles published previously in Canadian little magazines, it represents the conclusions of a well defined and fully developed poetic theory the influence and particulars of which have since become well known.

Creeley first suggests that the poem must be understood as a total entity: a whole which is a "high energy construct" rather than a progression of individual lines or thoughts. If it is to be successful and embody a tension which holds it together and provides it with form, there can be no generalities or vague language because, as Pound explained, these can only detract from the poem's clarity and precision. Also, in order to be modern the poet must seek the structure of the poem from the "character of his own language" and present it on the page in a manner which, to him, most closely represents his own natural breathing and speech patterns. Only in this way can the writer escape the confines of the inherited line and traditional form. Creeley refers to William Carlos Williams' thinking in this context in order to make his own meaning clear:

> When Williams beats on the sonnet, and he has done it I think brilliantly- he is hitting at a usage which denies form now.

> In short- that implies we ourselves are incapable as our predecessors were of course not- of invention, of finding in the direct context of what we know, where we are, an exact means to form- which will be the direct issue of such contact. The sonnet says, in short, we must talk, if you want, with another man's mouth, in the peculiar demands of that 'mouth,' and can't have our own.[43]

Another aspect essential to good poetry is economy of language. One of the negative influences that traditional forms have upon contemporary poetry is that they tend to require excess verbiage in order to accomodate their particular pattern. Thus, by avoiding traditional poetic forms, the modern poet is able to use only the words which are necessary to elicit the required impact from the utterance he is making. Perhaps most significant in terms of Canadian poetry is Creeley's disinterest in poetic content which he considers to be simply a matter of each writer's personal preference. Whether the poem is understood or well received by its readers depends upon the reader's previous experience with poetry just as his understanding of "love" depends upon the extent to which he has experienced it. Poetry thus makes strict demands on the reader as well as the poet and, unlike the thinking which dominated the Thirties and Forties, there is no obligation on the part of the poet to accomodate his style or subject matter to the needs of particular readers. His concern is with poetry and not with public opinion or the development of cultural sensibility.

One of the difficulties that Creeley observed regarding Canadian poetry was that it was too closely aligned (often in spite of itself) with external influences. As a result

Canadian poetry never had the chance to realize its own sense of place in terms of its own speech. In "A Note On Canadian Poetry" (Contact 8) he points out that since the poetry has been historically dependent upon colonial taste and fashion, it is possible that it:

> . . . might always be this attempt, not so much to fit, say, into an environment but to act in the given place. If there is no major poet in Canada, if there never was one, etc., I think it is part of the same problem. A theoretic embarrassment of 'culture,' all the tenuosities of trying to be local and international at the same time, etc., take an energy otherwise of use in the making of an idiom peculiar to the given circumstances.[44]

This suggests that Contact's contemporary enthusiasm for international poetry was in his view doing very little to establish a Canadian poetic "idiom" which arose from a specific sense of place. At the time this is exactly what Souster and Dudek preferred. Canadian poetry, as such, was not the centre of their interest. They were interested in modern poetry-in-process regardless of its national origin. Souster in particular seems to have taken seriously the advice given by Cid Corman in his review of Dudek and Layton's anthology, Canadian Poems 1850-1952, which appeared in Contact 6, emphasizing the dangers inherent in being overly conscious of national literary identity:

> It should be emphasized, however, that the danger of a national concern and exaggeration must constantly be fought against. There is not a single poet in the United States, for example, of true merit (cf. W. C. Williams, Pound, Marianne Moore, Stevens, etc.) who does not owe a great deal to the poetries of other countries' languages. In fact, it is doubtful that their verse would have occurred without such pollenizings. And the quality of the resultant verse is not confined to its exploitation simply out of national immediacy, but its exploration of human particulars within the local and universal frame.[45]

By taking Creeley's observations a step further, Corman suggested that the only way a unique national poetic voice could eventually be developed was through an awareness and assimilation of the poetic techniques of other countries. The real danger was that by being too self concerned Canadian poets would continue to limit their range of expression and remain as they had been in the past, minor, parochial talents isolated from the international literary community. Both Creeley and Corman (somewhat condescendingly) emphasized the importance of seriousness and dedication to the craft of poetry if any significant change in modern Canadian poetry was to occur. Dudek had expressed the same view in "Où Sont Les Jeunes?" hoping that the poet who was a "professional" craftsman might emerge from the sincere and dedicated efforts of the young. The one brief article devoted specifically to young Canadian writers who showed such potential was Dudek's "Two New Poets: Phyllis Webb and Gael Turnbull," which also appeared in Contact 6. The article is cursory and intended primarily to bring the poets' names to the attention of Contact readers because of their promise of being serious artists:

> Others write as an avocation; dozens of new names appear and melt off each year. But the "new poet," painfully out of line with public expectations, willy-nilly original, cursed with the role of hero-villain- is a dedicated being. Whom the gods love they make deplorably mad. Of such, I gather, or reasonably hope, are these two, Phyllis Webb and Gael Turnbull.[46]

Thus, by Contact 6 the possibility of a new generation of dedicated Canadian writers did not seem quite so remote as

it had when Dudek challenged them to appear in Contact 1. "Où Sont Les Jeunes?" had asked for the renewed vigor that only young poets could provide and Contact was established as a magazine in which their skills could be tried and their experiments performed. The criticism of the magazine promoted the work of the Origin writers as examples of what could be achieved if the principles of Ezra Pound were seriously considered and applied to modern poetic expression. There was, however, far less Canadian poetry which embodied these ideals than American and therefore American poetry and translations of European writers dominated the content of the magazine in order to familiarize Canadian readers with the most current examples of avant-garde international poetry. The attitude toward poetry that Contact implied then, was that Canadian poetry should be understood in an international context and that like the contemporary American writing, it should make use of the critical ideas of Pound and Williams. In addition it should be bold, exciting, and innovative. A study of the Canadian poetry published in Contact will determine the extent to which it reflects these characteristics.

Of the two new poets that Dudek praised for having serious artistic intentions, Phyllis Webb has since proven to be an intelligent, complex, and dedicated poet. The seven poems she published in Contact are early examples of a poetic style which has now become familiar and which embodies, perhaps better than any other at the time, the techniques Contact found most favorable. A poem which appeared in the

final number of the magazine will serve to introduce her method:

The Mind Reader

I thought,
and he acted
upon my thought,
read by some wonderful
kind of glass
my mind:
saw passing that way
gulls floating over boats
floating in the bay,
and by some wonderful
sleight of hand
he ordered the gulls to land
on boats
and the boats to land.
Or, was it through waves
he sent the boats
to fly with gulls
so that
out of care
they all could play
in a wonderful
gull-boat-water way
up in a land of air? (Contact 10, p.9)

The vision which unites the gulls with the boats and the boats with the gulls is beautiful both in terms of the sounds the words make and the image they evoke. The subject is simple and realistic but through the poet's imagination is made to perform in a physically improbable way so that the visionary world of the imagination is transformed into the real world of boats and gulls leaving the reader with an impression of the true nature of the relationship between the living birds and the inanimate boats over which they soar. Although entirely different things, the poem tells us that the two have much in common. The "mind reader" is the poet's imaginative vision which allows truth to be experienced, visualized,

and articulated if not explained. The vision is the poet's own and her unique view is expressed with minimal attention to formal literary conventions of logical thought progression. To echo Creeley's previously cited quotation from W. C. Williams, Phyllis Webb talks with her own "mouth" and sees the world freely through her own imaginative eye. She has escaped the tyranny of subject matter and the conventions of traditional structure and creates the poem only in order to formalize and share her particular view of the universe with the reader. Her method is that of implication rather than exposition and therefore the poem makes very economical use of language depending almost entirely upon nouns and verbs to provide the necessary unifying tension. The only adjective used up until the second last line is "wonderful" which is repeated three times (once in each of the poem's three parts) before it becomes climactically joined with the final unifying compound adjective "gull-boat-water." The poem thus embodies the qualities of economy, precise craftsmanship, and inner tension based on the association between specific named things that Robert Creeley advocated in "A Note On Poetry" in Contact 6.

Miss Webb's Contact poetry as a whole is a product of the kind of fresh imagination and original perspective that Dudek hoped for in "Où Sont Les Jeunes?" There is no explicit social or political concern and no attempt to describe the world realistically or appeal to a wide audience. The poetry is intensely personal and often cryptic and therefore demands

an imaginative "leap" on the part of the reader. Two poems as cases in point are "Rabbits Intimidate Her Eyes . . ." and "Stories," both of which appeared in Contact 2. In the former poem the mechanical reproductive nature of the rabbits is contrasted to the emotional attitude of the speaker who is "in love with barrenness." The vision of wildly procreating animals becomes a nightmare which reinforces her feelings of hatred at the "diseased increase." The speaker wishes that the chaotic reproduction could be ordered and given meaning other than that ascribed to blind instinct. Thus she wishes she had the "heart to give / to stop them dead with love / and drop rabbits unlimited / into the violet earth." To stop them would put an end to "this filthy crop of love" as well as to her own anxiety which has arisen from the futility of barrenness. In "Stories," the problem is that of the human inability to be honest, spontaneous, and original. Each face put on is "A mask discerned before," each thought is "a thought pursued before," and each action "An act rehearsed before," and thus the human condition becomes a sham. The implication in the poem is that meaningful communication between people is impossible (as it was between the rabbits in the previous poem) under these circumstances and the realization of this results in psychic pain. The pain is emphasized further in the final stanza when the feelings of isolation are expressed in terms of "a brand" on the skin which forces a physical scream from the body. From these two poems a common style and central theme of Miss Webb's Contact

poetry can be discerned. In all, the individual exists in a state of tension between the fear of taking risks which will allow life to be fully experienced and the anxiety and guilt which results from being so afraid. "Quick Relief" (Contact 6), for example, deals metaphorically with the modern tendency to avoid pain and anxiety. Various means of avoiding that part of life which is unpleasant can easily be found through drugs or by pretending it does not exist. Tears shed for good reason seem obsolete in the contemporary world and are now only "displayed in aesthetic tombs" where they "glisten as diamonds of the ancient sane, / sad in a sad museum." The slogan of the modern world is the refrain of the poem: "For we can all be easy, easy / We will all be easy." Instead of facing the negative aspects of life the normal tendency is to seek a palliative which reduces all to passivity and oblivion. In "Weather Forecast" and "Necessity: economic and otherwise," both of which were published in Contact 3, the theme is explored again. "Weather Forecast" is concerned with the natural inability to accept the winter season for what it is. Instead, the person in winter looks beyond, depending upon past experience for his certainty that spring will follow and that the winter will not last forever. Although there is a tone of positive belief in the poem, there is also the suggestion that the wintertime may offer a dimension of experience which is important in itself if only people would accept it completely rather than continue to hope that "March, / the miracle son, will blow in / yellows

and the primitive green of June." Similarly, "Necessity: economic and otherwise," deals with the human tendency to avoid confrontation with the fact of death even though it may be extremely obvious. The face of death causes the observer to retreat "in righteous fear" and seek refuge in a more acute awareness of life. As the last lines phrase it, human nature is "pressed by necessity to pick / the flesh and metal marrow of the quick." Presented with the spectre of death, Miss Webb, in a typically cryptic twist of metaphor contrives the image of man as a scavenger who feeds upon the bones of life because he is incapable of meeting the greater challenge of death. The long poem, "Standing," which appeared in Contact 8 and was later published in Trio[47] is a monologue which discusses the inadequacy of understanding the human condition and the individual personality in terms of various "stances." It suggests that the natural tendency to define man as an erect, two-legged being who is most noble physically and intellectually when standing upright against all opposition is very naive and romantic. Although other positions are just as characteristic of him, man prefers to see himself standing and his "stance" is to be "HANDLED/ WITH CARE." Stance is ego and because ego is a limited aspect of human personality, man betrays his own childishness and fallibility by giving it so much emphasis in the symbolic definition of his being. Maintaining one's stance demands "Care, one aspect only / Of our freedom- / Enlightening / As learning to walk." Man understood as individual-standing-

upright is thus a defence against the more truthful awareness of man as a being capable of many other less noble postures as well. In his very unwillingness to see himself in other ways, he betrays deeper characteristics of pride and insecurity. The poems that Phyllis Webb published in Contact are thus concerned with the larger questions of life and death, weakness and strength, love and hate, rather than with more specific issues of current social and political import. From within her own system of logic and her own unique psychological approach to reality she attempts to express something of the universal condition of man and the world he inhabits. In both poetic technique and angle of vision she is markedly different from the poets of the Forties and her innovation is characteristic of the type of writing that Souster hoped to make public through Contact. The fact is, however, that very few of the other Canadian poems in the magazine approach the standard of those of Phyllis Webb.

The other "new" poet mentioned by Dudek in his Contact 6 article was Gael Turnbull. Turnbull published six poems in the magazine and they are much less innovative than Webb's. Two of them, "Dawn Over The City" (Contact 7), and "Sunset" (Contact 8) for example, are traditional nature lyrics. "Dawn Over The City" is a simple rhyming quatrain: "A silent chisel cracks the night / And golden splinters litter every height. / Each curtained window grows more bright. / The clouds are branded, and the roofs are paved with light." The balanced adjectival description of a natural phenomenon could just as

well be a product of a 19th Century romantic imagination and seems extremely ordinary when compared to Webb's poems. This same is true of "Sunset" which, aside from the interesting central image of the city buildings gathering dark shadows into their crevices like sediment as the sun goes down, is again primarily concerned with natural description for its own sake. That Turnbull was influenced by the English romantics is suggested by "Only The Dreamer" (Contact 9) which is subtitled, "after a line by Keats." In this poem the dreamer is characterized as a man who wastes or "petrifies" the existential experience of each day by being too occupied with the universe of the imagination: "he congeals his days, / Seeking in vain in mirrors / For his molten face" and thus he never knows himself as a real man in a real world.

In Contact 6 Turnbull published two short satirical exercises. One which is untitled, pokes fun at the foibles of Greek gods giving credit only to "Ulysses who adapted, / And Aeneas who was lucky." The other, entitled "Lines For A Cynic," is as follows: "A lofty stare. A fat behind. / These guard the opinions of mankind. / I am hungry. I have dined. / These summarize the human mind." Turnbull's best and most ambitious poem, however, is "Post-Mortem" which appeared in Contact 8. Here he shows that he is capable of sincere compassion and serious thought concerning the issues of life and death as well as wry wit and sensitive description. As a doctor, Turnbull probably participated many times in the post-mortem ritual and the poem considers the implications

of death itself which at first appears "easy and without regret." But unable to stop at the bare reality of the corpse, he is led to see death as the end result of a life which has "contracted in simple stages: / Friends, then family; several, then one; / A home, then a house; a room, then walls; / And a last yellow curtain to obscure the sun." From here he considers the final narrowing of her universe to a hospital room and eventually the bed and the body itself concluding that: "Death is simple and the ultimate joke, / like a faded wisecrack in that gaping mouth / that swallows all answers. Oh, death is a clown / that covers our face with our photograph." Thus the "post-mortem" is the "last entertainment" in which the doctor alone is left to "Explore these cinders that were some man's wife." Gael Turnbull, though a new name during the early Fifties, is not a particularly innovative poet and his Contact poems are similar to those which had been written in Canada during the Forties. A poet showing considerably more originality, though not the kind generally advocated by the modernist poetic of Contact, is Eli Mandel.

Although Mandel published only three poems in the magazine, they indicate the beginnings of the myth-making "school" of writing which was developing in Canada at the same time that Souster, through Contact, was attempting to bring poetry back to the roots of modernism. In his poems Mandel attempts to transfigure the present in terms of archetypal mythic allusions which presumably provide a common ground on which the poet and the intelligent reader may meet.

The basic difference between this attitude toward poetry and that of the modernist poetic lies in the mythopoeic writer's dependence upon knowledge which is extraneous to the poem itself rather than upon the simple impact of well chosen, well placed words which name and amplify aspects of the experiential world. Except for the brief and whimsical "Triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite" which appeared in Contact 6, Mandel's Contact poems were later published as part of his contribution to Trio, the selection of "first poems" by Turnbull, Phyllis Webb, and Mandel produced by Contact Press in 1954. The second poem from "Minotaur Poems" appeared in Contact 4 and the first two parts of the sonnet sequence "Val Marie" were printed in Contact 6. Although showing little of the myth-making imagination which would later dominate his work, D. G. Jones also published three poems in the magazine. "The Lilypad" was printed in Contact 9, and Contact 10 included "The Osprey" and "Free Press." Both Mandel and Jones show signs of the mythopoeic writers' interest in a return to traditional poetic forms and the use of historical archetypes and thus represent an attitude toward poetry which is at odds with the modernist attempt to "make it new." Mandel's carefully made sonnets and Jones' rhyming iambic pentameter lines seem much out of place in Contact and much out of date in terms of the critical ideas of Corman and Creeley. That Jones had not yet crystallized his style and was adept at modernist techniques, however, is illustrated by "The Lilypad" which in its imagistic, oriental overtones is very much the kind of poem that Souster

and his American mentors would have admired:

Sunk in the amber shallows
in an August noon
a lilypad is deep
blood red;
it beats
on drowned memory
like a drum
and does not even
ripple the clear water.

With James Reaney, Anne Wilkinson, Jay Macpherson, and Eli Mandel among others, however, the role of the poet as myth-maker and the mythopoeic function of poetry became significant poetic attitudes during the Fifties even though the little magazines were not generally responsible for their populatity. The mythopoeic aesthetic developed parallel to, but apart from, the modernist aesthetic of magazines like Contact, CIV/n, Combustion, and Delta. One of the motivations behind Delta in fact, was a wish to counter the obscurantist tendencies that Louis Dudek felt were inherent in the mythopoeic style. Thus the myth-making poets, although influential in the later development of Canadian poetry, were not widely represented in the little magazines during the Fifties. The full expression and embodiment of the mythopoeic attitude in terms of the little magazine was not realized until 1960 when James Reaney dedicated Alphabet to "the iconography of the imagination."

Aside from those of Dudek and Layton, the various other Canadian poems that were published in Contact gather conveniently into three subject categories: love poems, portraits of individuals, and poems about art itself. Louis

Dudek's wife, writing under the pseudonymn of Kay Fredericks, published love poems in Contact 3 and 4. "In The Eyes Of My Beloved" (Contact 3) stresses the empathy and common experience that lovers share and at the same time expresses the inadequacy of a relationship in which "He cannot contain me / nor I him." The efforts of the lovers in their quest for mutual fulfillment and understanding leaves their bodies figuratively "broken by stones," and the poem concludes with the image of them tragically destroyed by their own attempt to share one another completely. Violence too, is prominent in "Red" which appeared in Contact 4. Here the lover sees herself as an empassioned tigress whose desire has been aroused by "The flickering tongue" of her beloved which has "split a fine venom" into her veins. The physical effects that this has upon her are grotesquely described: "My cheeks are hotter than fire, / I have grown wild-eyed. / My hair stands out from my head. / There is more spring in my feet / than a panther's. / My teeth have sharpened points / And I long to drink blood by the moon's light." The description of her emotional state when sexually aroused is indeed frightening and original but in no way corresponds to the poetic qualities of economy and implication that Contact hoped to promote. In "The Process" (Contact 4) the poet deals with the abstract generality of "becoming" in terms of a parable. She progresses through the seasons and experiences true love and finally comes to the place of awareness where the voices of the prophets create "a loud singing about me." Besides being

concerned with love, the poem develops into a statement about the process by which the artist achieves the inspired state of awareness necessary to the creative act.

Similar to Kay Fredericks' is the style of Marianne Macdonald whose poem "Eden" appeared in Contact 3. She too attempts to describe the emotional and intellectual state of the lover. The poem is a metaphorical description of the emotional journey taken during sexual intercourse from the "high tower of hours" and the "plunge into the tawny breast / Of a rushing sun" to the time when the "far tower / Faded and melted into the breeze-blue day; / Our wind-song flung only an echo to a forgotten wrong." Her final question: "Was this loss our exile or return?" describes the compound feeling of emptiness and fulfillment which follows the sexual act and at the same time serves as a metaphor for the continual state of ambivalence which is the lover's domain. Both Fredericks and Macdonald are considerably more frank in their treatment of the emotional experience of love than many of their earlier female counterparts, but both are also prone to overstatement and extravagant description. Macdonald, however, does attempt to be technically innovative through the use of internal rhyme and alliteration which compliments the dramatic progression of the poem.

The poems which present portraits of individuals are also traditional in form and technique and could just as well have been written during the Thirties. Avi Boxer's "The Red And The Black" (Contact 7) and "Disarmament" (Contact 3) are

good examples. "The Red And The Black" is the sarcastic story of "Louis the Great" from his years as a young rebel who is (rather unfortunately) "sensitive, clever, jung, and unafreud," to an older man who after having become "adjusted," "rides an advertiser's back / Employed by Circe as a literary hack." In "Disarmament" the "easy" irony and ineffective punning is continued. The subject is a one-armed Korean war veteran who is now among the ranks of the unemployed on a "palegreen hemorrhaging" park bench in Montreal. Rather than expressing sympathy for his subject, however, Boxer sees him philosophically and in general terms, asking: "O who will extract from / the seared hide of history / this iodined splinter?" The importance of fate and the unjust absurdity of war also provides the background for "To A German Girl Of Bad Eilsen" (Contact 8) by F. C. Fyfe. After opening with the romantic: "O, my lost and beautiful Annelore," the poem directly states the issue. A German girl of nine, after living through the war, is accidently killed by a crashing plane. The closing question is the crux of the poem: "why should it be so / that a British Vampire jet / flown by F/O C. G. Tucker, / . . . should crash into power lines on March 14 / and explode you both into eternity?" The two remaining portraits are R. S. Edgar's "The Old Man" (Contact 8), and George Nasir's "The Thief" (Contact 7). Edgar sees the old man as a landscape which was once rugged and filled with life but has now become worn and barren. The man who "Once travelled / seven-leagued to sky; / now hobbles on a bent root /

ripped / from the salt-drained earth." He does, however, retain dignity and wisdom and "with the trees' power / palmed in a hand / and crested with the sun / he draws concentric circles / around the centuries." "The Thief" in George Nasir's poem is a man with all of the vices that the ordinary man possesses. He is vain, hard-hearted, ambitious, and clever but unlike the non-criminal, he has shaped his world after the wrong models and has become a self-made victim. Ironically the thief is condemned to perpetuate his way of life because he is ashamed of who he is and therefore strikes out at the human values he most prizes: "Ashamed, you cast aside the blanket of all sentiment, / and frantically, with fistfuls of your alley jargon, rise, attack / the image of your own escape." Nasir is not entirely sympathetic with the man, however, because he sees the deeper basic reason that he must act as "a tiger, caged" is because he has never learned to understand the world in terms of others. It is selfishness- "the / precedence of No. 1," which is the most important factor defining who he is and how he acts. All of the character portraits in Contact are thus only modest variations of a genre which has had a long history. The major difference between these poems and others written in the Thirties for example, is that these tend to take a more cynical view of the human condition. Only in Edgar's "The Old Man" is man seen compassionately as a noble figure.

The group dealing with the subject of art and the creative process includes poems by Kay Smith and Wanda

Staniszewska. In "The Moosewood Blossom" (Contact 2), Kay Smith compares the delicacy and order of the flower to the beauty of Praxiteles' sculptures both of which have been made from "perfect love" with "nothing left to chance." Her method is descriptive and the central feature that the flower and the sculpture hold in common is the quality of whiteness: "Like all whiteness how it does sing / in the cave of your ear from the mole soft branch / colour clasped in the lime green staunch / hands of the leaves each leaf veined / distinctly the segment between the veins green / green inviting to the flesh as plush." The poem then, makes use of the flower as a means of discussing the qualities of precision, order, and beauty which all artfully created things must possess. Wanda Staniszewska's poem "Sculpture" (Contact 4) is also concerned with the creative process. "The firm hand" which "controls the cutting of loud rock" and "shapes a delicate / bleeding warrior " has the power to let the warrior live "more bravely" in perpetuity. The sculptor has been inspired by the atmosphere of the world he is creating and thus is able to depict the warrior in his most ennobling dramatic situation. The artist in Kay Smith's "Advice In Defiance Of The Poet" (Contact 2) is seen in a different light. Here he is someone to be avoided because of his tendency to steal experience for use in his art. Cloe is therefore right to run from her poet-lover because his purpose in love is devious. His "love has no eye for mortal woman / In you he sees only his promise of temples, of whitest poems."

The poet is in love with the idea of love rather than with Cloe herself and therefore she is advised to "Fly him, the Golden One!" The true artist is devoted to his art and because he is incapable of being totally involved in any human relationship is not to be trusted.

Two other poems might be cited as examples of Contact's tendency to publish Canadian work which was not entirely compatible with its critical ideals. Colleen Thibaudeau's "Boot Heels" and "Tears" which appeared in Contact 5, though depicting rather unique states of mind, are devoted to generalized, abstract concepts rather than the implications which attach to concrete objects and particular ideas. "Boot Hells" is concerned with the awareness of "hundreds and thousands of marchers" which dance "On the needle point" of her mind. The bootheels of the marchers indicate a nagging presence of guilt and an uncomfortably vague knowledge of forces beyond the speaker's control but the implications of these effects are never suggested. Instead she is left with the general question: "what do I really know about these far away marchers?" and the unsatifactorily abstract answer: "Just that they seem to partake of forever." Similarly in "Tears," the speaker fantasizes upon the possibility that a river of tears shed by everyone in the world "would burn up evil at a drop." Such a collective outpouring of compassion and sorrow, however, presents the equal possibility that an indifferent earth would simply "drink up / such a tear river" leaving the weepers crying "despairing tears of never."

The poem questions the value of human compassion and sorrow as a useful force against evil and suffering but offers nothing but a vague statement of the existence of both positive and negative possibilities as a conclusion. Based upon abstract concepts, both poems leave the reader with only abstract questions which are in the end barely worth pondering. As such, the poems are certainly not the kind of writing that Contact magazine ideally wished to publish. These poems along with many of the others that have been discussed, indicate that Souster and Contact were primarily interested in a type of poetry which was not yet being written in Canada to any great extent. Because he was unwilling to exclude Canadian poetry entirely from the magazine, Souster seems to have published the young poets whom he felt might develop their talent if given the opportunity of appearing in print along with contemporary American and European writers. It has previously been shown that Souster was satisfied to publish "unpolished" work in progress provided that it was seriously intended and gave some promise of better results in the future. Souster himself published no poems in Contact but his colleagues, Irving Layton and Louis Dudek, contributed by far the greatest number of Canadian poems to the magazine. It was their work and that of the new American writers therefore which provided the majority of examples for the younger poets to follow.

As in First Statement and Northern Review, Irving Layton's Contact poems deal with a wide variety of subjects. Six of the twenty-two are comments upon poetry and the

creative process and they express both his subjective experiences as an artist and his critical attitudes toward others. In "Genius, Love, And Poetry" (Contact 3) and "Canadian Aesthete" (Contact 7) Layton attacks the kind of poetry and the type of poet he most dislikes. "Genius, Love, And Poetry" suggests that poetry should be the result of the poet's honest personal convictions rather than a reflection of attitudes or subjects which are either socially or culturally fashionable. The writers of the Thirties and early Forties have often been accused of willingly adopting a cause only to discard it when a better one arose and Layton adds his criticism to this tradition by remarking: "of a certain / proletarian poet that / his mind was like the grease / covered bottom of a cold / unwashed frying pan / and that he was prudent / to avoid all fires / especially the Muse's." The "Canadian Aesthete," on the other hand, has a different problem. Rather than having too much to write about, he adopts the pose of a poet but can find no subject for his poetry. Layton pictures him as an effete idealist with water dribbling at his mouth and "eyes moyster than an oyster" and he offers him advice in the form of " . . . rhymes / Struck for these times" as follows: "Reviewer sewer / Pratt's sprats / Tycoon spitoon / Culture / Borscht." There is no room in Layton's understanding for the reticent, meek, over-sensitive artist. He must be virile and boisterous to make himself heard as the final lines of the poem advise: "Soft Boy be Rough Boy / Let them feel your knuckles / Let them have it

you know where." Layton's muscular poet, throwing relentless punches at the groin of genteel culture is by now a familiar figure but the fact that he is described again in Contact suggests that contemporary poetry was not as aggressive or bold as he would like it to be. Layton continues to view the poet as an impassioned artist of experience who draws his inspiration from the "gods" and in this view he is at odds with the rational and highly organized poetic formulae of Creeley and Olson. His common ground with them, however, and part of his value to Contact was his own sincere devotion to poetry. If, as Dudek suggested in "Où Sont Les Jeunes?" Contact was interested in poets who would take their craft seriously, the magazine could have had no better writer to set an example than Irving Layton. Although in "Soleil De Noces" (Contact 6) he says: "When the gods begin / to batter me / I shall howl / like a taken / virgin" when describing the moment of creative inspiration, Layton does not allow himself to believe that every poem he writes is successful or inspired. As "The Drunken Poet" (Contact 1) shows, he is quite capable of laughing at both his poetry and his role as a poet:

> God knows I find no happiness
> In drinking whiskey to excess;
> But stretched out on a privy floor
> With every belch my spirits soar;
> The plaudits of the noisy bowl
> So flattering are to my poor soul
> They are at last persuading me
> I am the poet I am said to be.

A less whimsical approach to his awareness of the creative process, however, is more common as poems like

"Sancta Simplicitas" (Contact 10) and the well known "Composition In Late Spring" (Contact 8) attest. The two poems provide an interesting contrast as well as a further comment upon Layton's understanding of the creative process. "Composition In Late Spring" is a wonderfully sensual expression of the elation which accompanies the experience of love in late spring and the final result of such happiness is spontaneous poetic inspiration. "Sancta Simplicitas" deals with the opposite method by which poetry can be made. Here the Rabbi wishes the poet to consciously create for him a poem which is "simple and uncomplicated / as a little spaniel" so that he may see "a humble, hungering man- / God's careful mercy / in the face / and the four warm paws / placed on his field of glory." Although the poet knows what "the good man meant," he finds himself incapable of consciously and methodically making such a poem upon request. Perhaps the poem can be written but not without the necessary moment of intuition and inspiration. Layton's ideal poet, then, is the inspired artist who is not afraid to oppose the cultural norms of gentility, propriety, and respectability which he declared in his preface to Cerberus to be responsible for the devitalization of contemporary poetry. His wish is that others join him in the attempt to utter "Whitman's 'barbaric yawp' . . . to send them finger-plugging their ears and scurrying for cover under their tea-tables."[48]

As well as poems about poetry, Layton contributed several character studies to the magazine. In "Anacreon"

(Contact 3) and "Songs Of A Half-Crazed Nihilist" (Contact 1) his tone is boisterous and aggressive. "Anacreon" is an impression of the ribald, decadent manner in which the Greek erotic poet met life. He is pictured as an abandonned "raging sot" who drinks of the sun and earth and is only unhappy when evening comes and his "rum-pot" sun is empty. "Songs Of A Half-Crazed Nihilist" is a series of imaginative episodes in the life of a man who has become cynical because of his many encounters with deceit and corruption. He has found God proud and jealous, socialism a failed cause, poetry commercial, his city controlled by monstrous "Burghers," his friends unfaithful, and he has made an unfortunate marriage to a woman "with the face of an ox." Even his sense of patriotism has been destroyed since he has "Watched the fat & filthy f-----s / Wipe their fat & filthy asses / With the maple leaf / The Maple Leaf forever!" Layton is less vocal but no less angry at the narrow minded neighbor he depicts in "Portrait" (Contact 2). The man is "brainsick" and self-centred but the poet is most angered by the innocent, care-free, hypocritical manner he assumes when walking his dog at noon. Watching him like the monk in Browning's soliloquy, he observes that "The hot sun / Dessicates his guilt; / Between us the pale dust hangs / Like particles / Of sacrificial smoke." The poem "In Memory Of Fred Smith" (Contact 5) like "Portrait Of Aileen" (Contact 9) and "To A Very Old Woman" (Contact 4), is a sensitive and sincere tribute to someone whom the poet can admire. Fred Smith has lived a

very imperfect and unreasonable life and Layton is not romantic or sentimental in his assessment of him. He realizes that "unreason occupies / every man / until he dies" and is simply thankful that "I was known to him / Who loved my single aim: / His term accomplished / By that much am I diminished." Layton suggests that when any man dies it is his friends who are the real losers. Death is also the subject of "To A Very Old Woman." Here Layton is concerned with the grace and serenity with which the old woman is able to face death. Picturing her as a "frail" candle that "Burns gently and with composure," he sees her as a bride to "Darkness" whose child will be "Death." The poet asks her what she will do under these circumstances and she replies that she will do nothing for: "When Death and Darkness embrace / Over me / I shall have no face / I shall be utterly gone." The old woman, unlike the poet has succeeded in coming to terms with the end that all men fear and it is for this that he respects and appreciates her. In "Portrait Of Aileen" (likely Aileen Collins whom Layton was associated with when she edited CIV/n magazine) which appeared in Contact 9, Layton depicts a woman who has, through her sadness and her deep concern for the meaning of life, taught him "severity, [and] strictness of speech." Her interest in details such as "the centrality of the fly . . . impassive, a black demi-god," is parallel to Layton's own attitude in his poem "The Ants" which appeared in the same issue of the magazine. Like Aileen, he sees the ants "wriggling out / of the / electroluxed dirt" as highly

ordered forms of life which approximate demi-gods. Fascinated by their energy, determination, and apparent intelligence, he likens the ants to tiny warriors who seem to be gathering their forces and waiting "for signals." For Layton even ants, because they are a minute and complex form of life, cannot be taken for granted.

Layton's own condition as a man and a poet is the subject of three poems in the first number of Contact. In "The World's A Tavern" and "The Black Huntsman," he sees himself as a victim of forces beyond his control. The tavern in the former poem becomes a microcosm of worldly chaos as he sits watching with his beer. Soon the "fish hook" eyes of the patrons begin to "menace" him and he is gradually drawn into a wild association with them. There is confusion and humanity all around and the heads of the men at the beer tables appear like the heads of men who have come to the surface after a shipwreck. But after the soiree is over he is glad to have participated, even though in a drunken stupor, and he is brought back to reality where the magical confusion of the tavern is gone and "the blossoms" are left "decomposed at [his] feet in a bad odour." This private and not particularly unique experience is taken a step further in "The Black Huntsman." Here the poet is the quarry of hunters which though dangerous, cannot be clearly identified. They are vaguely pictured as the influences which affect the child as he is growing toward manhood and as they gain progressively more access to him gradually destroy his boyhood experience

of "delight as water in a glass pool." One of the hunters is Tennyson who has been "following" since the poet first discovered him in a book store. The Victorian ethos learned from Tennyson is a constant threat to his freedom and now he takes care to "look out for the evil retinue / Making their sortie out of a forest of gold." Despite the close proximity of genteel Victorian attitudes, the poet continues to dodge their influence. The final image in the poem however, is of himself having succumbed to their persistence dying the traditional poet's death in obscurity although he would have preferred "A death by water or sky."

In "Mount Rolland" (Contact 1) the poet's condition is described as "Pityless toward men" and as a result he is led to experience natural phenomena in human terms. His pity is displaced to the landscape of "impractical trees climbing the exhausted hillside / . . . like the beard of an uncombed tolerant monk" and he views the "untamed hills" as the necks of horses around which the "lariat" of highway has been thrown. Thus the poem implies that although Layton has transferred his feelings of pity from men to his natural surroundings at Mount Rolland, he is really emphasizing his concern for the trials of mankind by approaching them in this oblique manner. The landscape, as is often the case with Layton, is a means of indirectly expressing his deep feelings toward humanity. More directly confessional are the poems in which Layton considers his job as a teacher and an academic.

All three of these poems are concerned with the

impossible task that a teacher faces whether involved with a class of obtuse pupils, the difficulty of making the world of the imagination come alive, or the bureaucracy of a conservative school system. In "Letter To Louis Dudek" (Contact 6), it is the students with "peach-stone hearts" and predetermined social ideals which are cause for frustration. With no possibility of changing their view of the world or increasing their desire for experience, the poet-teacher expresses his hopes as follows: "In this brown room, / With a beauty apparently no one wants, / With images in my head / Of proffered hemlock / And the broached blood of kinsmen, / I pray the trim spaceships / That seek a far off Montezuman star / May fail and break like a laboratory bottle." Similarly in "To The Girls Of My Graduation Class" (Contact 5), Layton's concern is with his own irrelevance regarding the future attitudes and life styles of the girls he has been teaching all year. Although genuinely affectionate toward them as individuals, he realizes that his role in their lives has been trivial and at their graduation he becomes merely a buffoon "who hobbles after [them] a little way / fierce and ridiculous." As in the poem "Paideia" (Contact 7) he has become a pedagogue who perpetuates a system for its own sake rather than the sake of the students. He is part of a school that is "ordained / About its disfigured ringing / As flesh articulated / Upon the skeletal frame." As a member of such a system he realizes that:

> . . . Imagination
> Makes nothing happen, being

The shadow of a beggar's plate
On snow. Wicked persons, shiftless
Disturbers are too frequently
Imaginative: Blake, Rimbaud
And Lady Chatterley's Lover;
The officer's concern is quite
Properly with citizenship,
The production of character
Etcetera.

Love poems comprise the final type of confessional poetry that Layton published in the magazine and, somewhat surprisingly, there are only three: "Terrene" and "January Love" which appeared in Contact 2 and "End Of The Affair" which was published in Contact 10. "Terrene" is a simple expression of the fact that even in a crude world which is built upon authority and power, love can still be found. The lover here wishes to "knock out of / his lover's / hand / all the lottery tickets" so that she will be left with nothing but his love. In "January Love" the speaker warns his beloved to "look out" for the forces of wind and snow which are linking their "destinies together . . . Into a statuary of love." The poet is pleased that in a world of snow his love can be "impure" and carnal and he fantasizes upon the possibility of love so uninhibited that everyone will be aware of it as "shameful." "End Of The Affair" is the poem which is most completely devoted to the expression of a state of mind. The affair with his lover has come to an end and they have reached the point where even verbal communication is difficult. The poet wishes that they could make love once again and ruminates upon what might have been had their last evening together ended differently: "If I had stroked her

hair or she had spoken, / voice and touch had blotted out the difference. / Then she, perhaps, since no one minds / such half-remembered tokens, / had called my name . . . and said, Lie down beside me, love: the door is locked."

The love poems lack the eroticism and passion of Layton's earlier writing and his Contact poetry as a whole has certain general characteristics which are different from his work of the Forties. More of them, for example, are concerned with his own state of mind and private emotions than with public social comment. Social criticism is frequently implicit but it is no longer at the centre of his poetic interest. Poems like "Anacreon" and "Composition In Late Spring" are written in celebration of the abandoned enjoyment of life itself rather than as realistic descriptions of it and other poems suggest that Layton is no longer dependent upon the techniques of social realism. The Contact poems reflect a broadening of poetic interest and an attempt to articulate the great variety of the life in which he is such a vigorous participant. Although still boisterous and angry at times, and interested in shocking his readers out of their complacency, Layton also shows that he is now capable of tenderness and self-criticism.

Louis Dudek's total of fourteen poems in Contact is the second largest number among Canadian contributors and like those of Layton, they deal with a fairly wide range of subjects. Besides love poems there is a comment on Canadian national identity, a discussion of the question of mutability,

portraits of individuals, and a poem about the problem of appearance and reality. In "Canada" (Contact 1) Dudek attempts to show the manner in which Canada has evolved since it was founded "upon the runes of a bad century." The first problem to be solved was that of adapting to the physical environment. The result was a rather confused conglomeration of "humpy houses." The houses soon comprised "card-bored cities" complete with industrial pollution and an alienated population and the cities themselves eventually became the "Kingdom of Canada." At the end of the poem Dudek pictures the nation as a "factory with a shunting railway / through it, a continental assembly, a Par- / liament for mighty beams." Although the country has made industrial and technological progress, it has forgotten the more important values which define a nation and give it character. Thus, his final wish: "O / to be a country now, to be a people," is an expression of regret that after so many years of settlement and development, Canada has been left without a national identity. Whereas "Canada" is concerned with a particular history, "A Torn Record" (Contact 10) is concerned with the world history of religion, politics, and the arts, all of which prove that "Nothing that man makes, or believes, is permanent." Dudek comes to the conclusion that since "it is only a question of how long / what is left / of man's creations / can stand," the human quality which matters most is "desire." Faced with the destructive forces of time the poet sees himself as a creature of appetite "at the center of [a] whirlwind" whose only true

purpose is to fulfill his desires in the present while he has the opportunity. "Winter Song" (Contact 8), however, suggests that even human desire is not without changes in intensity. Here, "Desire has gone into his winter quarters / and all those other rioters that kept him company." In contrast to Layton's frequent celebrations of abandoned sensual experience, Dudek laments those occasions when men no longer feel a hunger for life. His obsession with futility is continued in "Old Newspaper: shall these bones live?" (Contact 1) in which he understands the function of the newspaper to be simply the documentation of trivia. The old newspaper is a record of historical events which symbolize the futility of human endeavor because in its pages the reader finds only "charnel bones of the past, hip-joints and broken teeth." Dudek's Contact poems, however, are not entirely so pessimistic and cynical. The love poetry in particular reveals other dimensions of his attitude toward the world. In "Device To The Lovelearn" (Contact 6), for example, he shows remarkable linguistic dexterity as well as the ability to approach a common theme with freshness and humor:

> Hillside of lovebelly arms and nick,
> Aroo yoo witch-of-a-slibbable-jungster!
> Mammarily sweet the lovebirds woken
> As blotch to tinkerwit yet you doo?
>
> Lizn! Receivers ever were women kind,
> No passivist givers did ever war enact
> Of jumpin jelucifers matchless delights,
> But gave and forged, did as they were did . . .

Whereas this poem owes an obvious debt to Cummings, "Lines From A Bamboo Stick" (Contact 5) echoes oriental verse tech-

niques that Dudek had become familiar with through Pound:

> In the dreary city, rainy days.
> You have left it empty
> as an abandoned house,
> chimneys bricked together
> and windows closed against rain.
> I will not see you
> all summer. Sidewalks empty,
> the sky silent,
> a bird sitting in wet leaves.

Although Dudek's experimentation is in the true spirit of Contact, most of his poems are similar both in content and form to those he published earlier in First Statement and Northern Review. His method is logical and linear, building gradually toward a startling or resolving conclusion. This, and his use of traditional rhythms and adjectival constructions no doubt accounts to some extent for the cool critical reception his work received from Cid Corman and the Origin writers. Nevertheless, Dudek's love lyrics are the best poems he published in Contact. In "Lover To Lover" (Contact 1) and "Alba"(Contact 4), the tone is intimate and controlled in keeping with the re-creation of the physical and emotional union of individuals during the act of love. "Lover To Lover" describes their association as a rhythmic poem in which the bodies are "dipthonged together" while "Alba" depicts the lovers "dragged . . . slowly, down, to the sound of / cataracts in the street below, in / humming early morning light." The poem "Another" (Contact 9) is somewhat more oblique in that it is through the voice of a bird that he has heard that his lover possesses words which "would cool [his] heart's wound." Similarly indirect love imagery is employed

in "For A Musician" (Contact 5). Here, it is the composers and the music they have created for the musician to play who are seen as his lovers. The poet sympathizes with the musician's relationship with his music because the music itself is without heart and loves the air through which it travels rather than the musician. In contrast to this is "Those Seaside Girls" (Contact 5), the most direct and sensual love poem printed in Contact. Here Dudek shows that he is capable at times of producing poetry which is equal to that of Layton in passion and intensity:

> Such delicate delicious loves there are,
> smooth as sipping cream, warm as milk curds,
> stiff toffee bodies mounted on tall limbs . . .
> and all would lie lax as wax and take delight
> from the rambling hand unflexing the knee
> to the lithe joint, lift, in the swift raid
> to their wild interior, liquid turbulence,
> wet walls, melting sides, working
> doors: lovers, so many there are, so glad
> to give-- who waste in the sun, melt on sand, spoil.

The Canadian poetry that Raymond Souster chose for Contact provides examples of the most current writing being done in Canada during the early Fifties. The older poets generally are less innovative in terms of form and technique although their work on the whole is superior to that of the younger writers. New poets such as Phyllis Webb, Eli Mandel, and Douglas Jones, however, received their first publication in the magazine and even at this early stage in their careers show the potential which was later to be realized. Although Souster was interested in publicizing the American, English, and European poets who were beginning to have a significant affect upon modern poetry, he was never willing to exclude

Canadian poetry from the magazine as Corman would perhaps have liked. The fact that he refused Robert Creeley's offer to have Contact printed in Mallorca as well as Corman's suggestion that the magazine merge with Origin indicates Souster's tenacity in keeping the magazine's Canadian character.[49] His enthusiasm for understanding current poetic activity in an international context did not override his policy of maintaining Contact's function as a workshop for young Canadian writers and introducing them (and the reading public) to possible international influences. This was one way of stimulating them to write in the manner he thought most necessary at the time. It has been noted that Phyllis Webb is perhaps the closest in style and inspiration to the type of poetry that Robert Creeley advocated and Souster admired. Although the Canadian poetry as a whole is not of this type, it does reflect several important differences from that which was being written just a few years earlier. There are more poems which depend upon the revelation of a particular state of mind rather than the state of contemporary society. The poetry is more personal and private in this regard and tends to deal with the larger universal issues of life, death, love, and experience rather than with issues of a specific social, political, national, or cultural nature. In other words, social realism and urban description are no longer the norms by which modern poetry is judged. Despite the social function that Layton and Dudek outlined for poetry in their prefaces to Cerberus, the Contact writing does not

generally have social reform as its explicit motivating principle. The concern is more with observing the world from a private, and often peculiar point of view with the emphasis placed on the imagination and the craft of the poem itself rather than upon its ability to change the world. The primary interest in Contact is thus centered upon poetry as a dynamic and important art form and not upon the inadequacies of society or the development of Canadian culture.

Just as he resisted Creeley's offer to print Contact in Spain and Corman's suggested amalgamation with Origin, Souster resisted Dudek and Layton's attempts to gain editorial influence with regard to the magazine. He preferred to maintain Contact as a small circulation mimeographed publication under his personal control. That Dudek and Layton felt restricted by Souster's "serious" attitude toward publishing the best experimental poetry possible is shown clearly in a letter from Dudek to Souster of November, 1952: "How about making your editorial associates editorialize more? Layton feels badly mauled every time you send back some of his work. As for me, I'd like occasionally to print a poem for some other reason than its a fine aht wuk . . ."[50] Souster, however, had learned from Corman that the main criterion upon which the decision to publish a poem should be based was the poem's artistic merit. Not wishing to compromise his editorial ideals, nor to have Contact become a magazine in which editorial associates received special status, Souster refused to submit to Dudek's request for a loosening of critical standards.

CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE
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THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

AUTHOR/AUTEUR
HORNSEY, R.F.

TITLE/TITRE
THE FUNCTION OF POETRY AND THE ROLE OF THE POET...

From this point on, Dudek directed his interest toward the publications of Contact Press and left Contact magazine entirely to Souster.

Louis Dudek's wish to be more directly associated with a literary periodical did not disappear and his chance came when Aileen Collins decided early in 1953 to establish CIV/n in Montreal. The title of the magazine was an abbreviation that Ezra Pound had used for the work "civilization" in one of his letters to Dudek. In the summer of 1953 Dudek sailed for Europe and upon his return he wrote to Souster regarding CIV/n, Contact, and the "new" poetry. His remarks are interesting because of the emphasis they place upon the social function of poetry at a time when this attitude was definitely losing favor:

> Irving's new enthusiasms- for Creeley, Olson, Corman etc.- you have probably had a direct line on, so I don't need to tell you. I'm all for the idea of a Canadian-American anthology of the new movement. There is one. Describe it as the new, civilized, social realism- a coming to grips with the filth of modern business society and politics, in the name of decent art and poetry, what the world has always known in the past as the right kind of life for people, including entertainments, out of which art naturally grows. I gather that all these poets and little mags we're interested in have this sort of anger, exasperation, under the skin. Our Canadian mags, Contact and CIV/n, are the most outright in making the meaning plain. Let it be our contribution. We're in the middle of the movement, and the most vocal part of it. If we keep hitting out there's no question that eventually we will be noticed and what we have done will be measured.[31]

Besides Dudek's disproportionate enthusiasm regarding the importance of Contact and CIV/n as influential forces at "the middle of the movement," his remarks above indicate that his continuing need to understand contemporary poetry

in terms of social realism meant that he had misinterpreted the thrust of the movement toward internationalism and was out of step with the modernist tendency toward an aesthetic rather than a social understanding of the function of poetry. Thus, while still involved with Souster and Contact, Dudek's critical views were considerably different than those embodied in that magazine. With Souster's refusal to allocate editorial responsibility beyond his own jurisdiction, and with his growing interest in the views of Cid Corman, Dudek found himself without an immediate outlet for his critical opinions. In order to provide himself with this possibility as well as satisfy his interest in being meaningfully associated with a literary magazine, Dudek became the mentor of CIV/n in 1953.

ii CIV/n Magazine

As Dudek explains in his introduction to Michael Gnarowski's Index To CIV/n,[52] the magazine was different from Contact both in editorial policy and tone. The title, CIV/n, itself suggests that the underlying attitude toward poetry which the magazine embodied saw poetry as an art form which was able to serve as a "civilizing" cultural force in a society which had become philistine and decadent. Unlike Contact, which for the most part approached poetry as an end in itself, CIV/n understood it also as an indicator of cultural sophistication and a means by which society could be criticized. Thus it is no accident that Dudek goes on in

his introduction to describe First Statement rather than Contact as the forerunner of CIV/n.[53] In both First Statement and CIV/n the social function of poetry is dominant. In CIV/n 2, Dudek reviewed Rexroth's The Dragon And The Unicorn in language which is reminiscent of that in the polemics of First Statement and in the review he states his understanding of the purpose of poetry as follows: "The Dragon And The Unicorn, may serve as an example of what can be done to give poetry the guts it needs, to win it back from the pasty sold-out intellectuals and critics and place it in the centre of the fight for reality and reason."[54] But although Dudek's tone here is one of seriousness and even urgency, CIV/n is not entirely characterized by such concern. Again, in opposition to Contact which always approached poetry with complete seriousness, this magazine sought to be less single minded. In Dudek's words: "It was free wheeling to a degree that neither Layton nor myself would probably have made it if we had edited it ourselves. On the whole it was lighter and less pretentious, and more fun, than any magazine I can remember."[55] Dudek's previously cited letter to Souster in which he expressed the wish to occasionally "print a poem for some other reason than it's a fine aht wuk . . ." was an indication of his uneasiness with the aesthetic restrictions that Contact demanded. In CIV/n these restrictions were lifted to such an extent that Dudek was given almost complete freedom, the best examples of which are his satiric poems and parodies published under the pseudonymns Alexander St. John

Swift and S. M. Organ Bowel.[56] Even in these, however, Dudek's purpose is to point out the inadequacies of contemporary society and the low level of Canadian cultural achievement. Poetry has a "civilizing" function and a social purpose and in the wasteland of the contemporary technological world the poet is seen as a culture-bearer whose art holds the potential for restoring human values which have been lost.

The central view of society and the condition to which CIV/n was opposed is described by Dudek in his review of H. A. Innes's Empire And Communications, The Bias of Communication, and Marshall McLuhan's The Mechanical Bride which appeared in CIV/n 3:

> . . . commercialized barbarism today threatens to oust, not only high scholarship and artistic sense, but ordinary common sense as well. The average Video-intoxicated American is a plain madman, living in a whirling tornado of tom-fool fantasy and advertised inanity, handing over so-called "taste" in his wholesale standardized culture into the hands of teenagers and nightclub entertainers, his automobile designed like a spaceship or jukebox, his home and office a product of Dupont and the Art-Directors of Fortune.[57]

Under these circumstances it is the poet's job to redeem through his art the true social and cultural values from the state of perversion into which the world of mass-media and advertising have caused them to fall. Thus the poet is engaged in a rear guard battle against the forces of an art-hating society. Neil Compton makes this same point succinctly in his review of Cerberus (CIV/n 2) when he observes with regard to Layton, Dudek, and Souster that: "All three are confident of the social value of art, and argue that the hatred of art which characterizes official culture in Canada is symptomatic

of our social sickness."[58] Dudek stated in his preface to Cerberus that although "Poetry cannot change the world in a day . . . in the end, only poetry, imagination, can do so"[59] and it was through CIV/n magazine that this critical attitude found its most complete expression during the Fifties. Irving Layton, who expressed essentially the same point of view in Cerberus, added his voice to the CIV/n critics in an article entitled "Shaw, Pound, and Poetry" (CIV/n 7). Concentrating upon the economic basis of power in contemporary society, Layton argued that even though the economic thinking of Shaw and Pound was faulty and sometimes foolish, the fact that as artists they were not afraid to turn their attention to such matters is an indication of their belief in the social mission of the poet. Devotion such as theirs, however, has unfortunately disappeared among contemporary writers and Layton's attempt is to point out the current need for similar social commitment:

> Their [Shaw and Pound] service to us was to point at the real perverters of language, morals, art; at the real debasers of thought and perception. Their audacity and good spirits are a tonic to a generation which has forgotten the existence of anger and pugnacity in the service of human values. With Shaw dead and Pound a certified madman the American and English bourgeoisie can sleep more soundly. They have nothing to fear from the delicate poets who have no searching economic questions to ask, or the convertees multiplying like black flies on the maggoty corpse of plutocratic culture.[60]

Aside from the social implications in Layton's remarks, there are two other inferences which are significant with regard to the critical stance of CIV/n. The first is that the majority of contemporary poetry is without commitment and vigor, and the second is that a major evil of the culture of the Fifties

is its tendency to debase the integrity of language. In connection with the first suggestion, CIV/n published Robert Currie's "Don't Blame This On Bliss" in the seventh issue. Currie particularized Layton's concern with the timidity and conservatism of the Canadian cultural milieu by drawing attention to the critical state of mind responsible for the then recently published anthology Canadian Poetry In English by Bliss Carman, Lorne Pierce, and V. B. Rhodenizer. By comparing this book which appeared in 1954 with Dr. Pierce's 1934 edition of Our Canadian Literature, Currie points out that the appearance of such an anthology is tragic evidence of the extent to which Canadian poetry remains dependent upon the 19th Century romantic tradition of nostalgia and "quaint doggerel." Modern and contemporary writers are included in the anthology only with apologies and thus it grossly misrepresents the state of Canadian poetry.[61] This attention to the "tradition" of Canadian poetry is the attitude that Layton was attacking in his article as promoting meaningless, "delicate," and insipid writing. This kind of poetry also contributed greatly to the denigration of the language of Canadian writing and, coupled with the weakening effects that modern advertising and communications dialogue had upon the idiom as a whole, fostered a lack of Canadian linguistic power. This "perversion" of language was the second important objection raised by Layton in "Shaw, Pound, and Poetry" and it is also a major theme in the critical canon of CIV/n. Neil Compton's only criticism of Cerberus, for example, was that

despite themselves, the poets were "limited by the grey and fuzzy unloveliness of our national tongue."[62]

This same theme is explored in greater detail by D. G. Jones in CIV/n 4. Jones titles his article "The Question Of Language Prostitution" and suggests that the integrity of language has deteriorated in proportion to the extent that the modern social phenomenon of advertising has developed. He begins by referring to Dudek's preface to Cerberus and his review of the books by McLuhan and Harold Innis as adequate statements of the current awareness of the negative effect that the advertising industry has upon language. Jones's thesis is that advertising uses language as a means of selling products rather than as a means of revealing the truth and also destroys the meaning of words by over-using them: "With ever-increasing means for mass communication, the use of language for propaganda, both political and economic, increases in frequency, in area covered and in power. Since we cannot know everything, we must trust language; there must be confidence that in its use truth is communicated. But the growing forces which are concerned with simple truthfulness are rendering language meaningless."[63] This is the danger that a sales-oriented society embodies with regard to language and it is only one of a number of pitfalls which can be culturally damaging. Thus it is the writer's role, both in Jones's view and in the view of CIV/n generally, to use language in such a way that its proper function be preserved: "Writers above all should

realize the nature of the threat to language these forces make. Those who use words to 'sell,' whether goods or ideas, destroy the reverence and life-giving power of good speech: they are enemies of mankind whom all must learn to fear and repel."[64] CIV/n also published a letter signed by several notable university professors including Clark Emery, Hugh Kenner, Marshall McLuhan, and Margaret Bates in protest against the current neglect of various norms of artistic judgement, one of which was itemized as "the growing carelessness in the use of language both private and public, and insensitiveness to the literary arts which serve to maintain language in a healthy condition for civilized use."[65] These observations, along with those of Layton, Dudek, and Compton, show clearly that one of the important aspects of CIV/n's concern with the relationship between art and society was the faith in the ability of poetry to function as a counterbalance to the commercial forces which were destroying the integrity of language. By serving this function, poetry not only aided in the maintenance of the "higher" individual and social values but also helped to preserve the very essence of culture itself. This relationship between poetry and national culture is another of the principal concerns of the CIV/n criticism.

One way in which this interest is expressed in the magazine is through the brief critical excerpts and quotations which the editors printed from time to time. In CIV/n 4, for example, some excerpts from a speech given by the director of publications for Canadian Industries Ltd. to the Montreal

branch of the Canadian Authors Association satirically emphasized the subservient role played by literature in relation to the world of commerce in Canadian culture. The speaker, Monty Berger, concluded that: "writing, like most other things, is, or should be regarded as a business."[66] The same issue contained a quotation from Kimon Friar regarding the question of Canadian literary identity which summarized the situation as follows: "The Canadian poets may be told what they perhaps know: that both the materialism of their country and the poet's impure quality or raccous [sic] revolt are inevitable consequences of a nation in growth."[67] Similarly, CIV/n 5 printed a quotation from Ezra Pound regarding the position of the artist in a society which is uninterested in his art: "If there aren't 30 or 50 people interested in literature, there is no civilization and we may as well regard our work as a private luxury, having no aims but our own pleasure. You can't expect people to pay you for enjoying yourself."[68] Also in CIV/n 5, Aileen Collins published a letter from the editor under the title "Canadian Culture" in which she synthesized the previous statements into an argument expressing the need for a rejection of self-conscious nationalism and the abandonment of the excuse of "adolescence" if Canadian culture was to develop. The main requisite in her view is the attempt to write poetry which draws the attention of the reader to the reality of the world around him: "the kind of poetry we want will be a vital representation of what things are, done in strong language

(if necessary) or any language, but it will rouse the reader to see just what the world around him is like."[69] To accomplish this aim Collins goes on to say that the Canadian poet must not be afraid to experiment or to write the occasional "bad" poem regardless of critical opinion: "For Kulchur's sake, at least, let's have a lot of bad good poetry in future, instead of more good bad poetry- and let the dead-head critics hold their peace until the call of the last moose."[70]

The criticism of CIV/n thus shows that the magazine was concerned with "civilizing" contemporary Canadian society by advancing cultural awareness. Their approach to poetry was social and they were particularly concerned with poetry's function as a means by which the integrity of language might be restored and preserved. The "art-hating" culture to which they were opposed was possessed by the philistine values which accompany materialism and the magazine took upon itself the task of helping in a small way to promote those higher values which accompany artistic achievement and imaginative thinking. Whereas Contact was primarily concerned with improving the quality of Canadian poetry, CIV/n was concerned with improving Canadian society as well. The criticism suggests that the editors saw poetry as a means to that end. In this attitude, CIV/n is less "contemporary" in its outlook that Contact which had, through the influence of Cid Corman and the Origin writers, gone beyond the need to justify poetry in other than aesthetic and artistic terms. Although CIV/n attempted to

show that it was not out of touch with the current American and international poetic influences by publishing reviews of The Translations Of Ezra Pound and work by Paul Blackburn, Charles Olson, and Robert Creeley,[71] the magazine was different in kind from Contact and Origin and not devoted to their aesthetic views. Creeley's "A Note On Poetry" which appeared in CIV/n 5 denying the descriptive function of poetry seems out of place among the other critical articles because of its total concern with the craft of poetry itself.

Although edited under the names of Aileen Collins, Jackie Gallagher, Wanda Staniszewska, and Stan Rozynski, there is no doubt that the real inspirational force behind the magazine was Louis Dudek and to a lesser extent, Irving Layton. Thus the differences between CIV/n and Contact can be attributed with a significant degree of accuracy to the differences between the critical attitudes of Dudek and Souster. Shortly after Contact has ceased publication, Dudek wrote to Souster reaffirming his antipathy for the American experimentalists and, by implication, his fundamental opposition to Souster's views: "One thing Contact did was bring Corman and that bunch in contact with Canada, mainly with Layton. It is a pity I couldn't, and can't see a way to cheer for these boys very much (as my review in CIV/n shows) and per contra they don't like my stuff either (don't know which came egg-or-chicken first, but their review in Black Mountain (Spring no.) has no kindness for me)."[72] This variance in critical perspective between Dudek and Souster continued and

eventually led to Souster's even greater interest in avant garde writing as evidenced by Combustion which he began in 1957 and to Dudek's increasing concern with the practical, social function of poetry which found expression in Delta which he established during the same year. Just as the critical attitudes of CIV/n and Contact differed, so the poetry of the two magazines has different characteristics. The poetry of CIV/n has a more direct relationship to the critical attitudes of the magazine than the Contact poetry has to the Contact criticism. A study of the Canadian CIV/n poetry reveals a remarkable consistency of theme, dividing generally into four main types: poems which offer cultural criticism by discussing the nature of art itself; social protest poetry which defends the integrity of the individual in a society which robs him of his individuality and warps his moral values with shallow advertising and material greed; overt social criticism which attacks social institutions and commercialism directly through satire and invective; and a fourth type comprised of personal, psychological poems which illustrate the state of mind of those who are trapped in such a society.

F. R. Scott's "Poetry" which appeared in CIV/n 6 provides a good starting point for a discussion of the poems which deal with the relationship between art and society and the nature of poetry itself. The poem asserts that even in a social and political environment which obscures the relevance of art, poetry will inevitably survive. The reason

he gives is based upon his belief that poetry exists in its ability to reveal meaning in incongruity and truth in analogy. Thus, the actions of politicians like Mackenzie King and the values of a society which substitutes "advertising for genuine pornography" ironically become perfect catalysts for poetic creativity. "If I write ostrich," he says: "Those who have never seen the bird see it / With its head in the sand and its plumes fluffed with the wind / Like Mackenzie King talking on freedom of trade." Scott does suggest that artists must alter their view of the world in order to be effective in the society of the Fifties, but he is sure that once they discover that what first appears to be a barrier may in fact be a new passageway, artists will overcome their frustration and begin again with greater enthusiasm:

> A rose and a rose are two roses;
> a rose is a rose is a rose.
> Sometimes I have walked down a street marked No Outlet
> Only to find that what was blocking my path
> Was a railroad track roaring away to the west.

Thus he is convinced that nothing "Can crush the uprush of the mushrooming verb / Or drown the overtone of the noun on its own." Poetry thrives on adversity and it is the poet's job to seek out new ways of responding to the frustrating social, cultural, and political circumstances in which he finds himself.

R. S. Edgar has three small poems which also offer advice to the artist of the Fifties. In "On Painting" (CIV/n 2) he suggests that the most significant qualities

artists should strive for are boldness and clarity: "Put it in black and white / not pale pastels / but / if colour comes / make sure you / paint / garnet flies / gold frogs / and above all/ heaven's gate a bright purple." Speaking of music in "Madrigal" (CIV/n 3) he suggests that another function art can serve is the depiction of simple order and tranquility in a world that is noisy and confused: "in this time / and in this place / only music / in counterpoint of pure simplicity / resolves." "O White Bird In The Dark Sky" (CIV/n 1) has a more ominous tone in its tentative hope that the symbol of the white bird that rises from the city to become a star in the night sky will also become a guiding light for a society which has fallen into darkness and whose people are "trembling with fear." Thus the white bird embodies the clarity of vision that people need and that art to a certain extent can provide. Although R. S. Edgar's faith in the humanizing power of art is not without reservation, two early poems by Leonard Cohen are even less optimistic.

Cohen's "Satan In Westmount" and "Folk Song" both appeared in CIV/n 5 and both contain warnings. The cultured intellectual of "Satan In Westmount" is seen as an evil mentor for his young and curious followers because his "descriptions / of the masters" and his "austere Spanish songs / from the Court of Ferdinand" are based upon the past rather than the present or future. Presumably, the information he gives is interesting but the possibility that it

will stifle rather than promote creativity and new thinking is distinct. Thus Cohen finishes the poem with an image of death and decay in the form of "a sprig of asphodel" which the man wears "discreetly" in his lapel. In this way the poem implies that unless art can be understood and conceived in terms of contemporary society it may well be a hinderance to the development of cultural awareness.

This warning is given a further dimension in "Folk Song" which dramatizes the naivety of those who expect art to serve impossible ends. The craftsman in the poem makes the speaker a beautiful bottle in which to keep his lover's tears but when he discovers that she cannot cry the vessel is discarded and "lost in a corner of my house." Thus the conclusion warns against judging the value of art upon criteria which are too limited. Without the knowledge that art can serve more than one purpose there is no possibility of appreciating its true value.

The inability to appreciate the true value of art is also the subject of Phyllis Webb's "Intuition Of A Literary Weekend" (CIV/n 1). In the tradition of Scott's "The Canadian Authors Meet" and Layton's "Keewaydin Poetry Festival," Webb satirizes the dilettantes of literary society who use their interest in culture as a status symbol. Such shallowness and pretense leads society in general to distrust the validity of cultural awareness and to doubt the importance of the artist's role. By maintaining the impression that culture is synonymous with intellectual snobbery, the people

and attitudes presented in the poem do both society and art a disservice by making the relationship between them less comprehensible. Other CIV/n poets also use satire as a means of exploring current attitudes toward art.

Louis Dudek, for example, writing under the pseudonym Alexander St. John Swift, considers the possibility that certain contemporary poets have gone too far in their attempts to write poetry which is bold, irreverent, and free. In "Hellcats In Heaven (for IPL, L.D. and RS)" which appeared in CIV/n 3, he imagines the reactions that Villon, Blake, Rimbaud, and Rabelais would have toward modern poetry. In Dudek's Collected Poetry (1971) the poem is subtitled "Report on the book Cerberus," the anthology by Layton, Souster, and Dudek which began Contact Press. It reads as follows:

> Francois Villon read one half,
> Ended with a bitter laugh:
> "May you be hanged for this,"
> He said. "Its awful stuff!"
>
> Next to read was William Blake;
> He said with a cough and a shake
> "Will you build Jerusalem
> With the boards of a jake?"
>
> Read it then Arthur Rimbaud,
> Read it shuddering as though
> He'd tasted something foul:
> "Merde!" he bawled. "Ca pue!"
>
> Read it Maitre Rabelais,
> Laughed, but fell a-cursing too:
> "Tis true I said faictz ce que veut-
> But how could I know what you would do?"

Although he includes himself as one of the poets capable of causing such response on the part of the great

past artists of experience, there is no doubt that Dudek's purpose here is to caution against the abuse of poetic license as well as to praise the freedom of choice that modern writers are able to exercise with regard to subject matter and form. The critical implication is that the poet's role as a culture-bearer cannot be fulfilled without a certain degree of emotional restraint and social discretion. However, Dudek's displeasure at what he considered to be the limited selection of contemporary poetry in Earle Birney's Twentieth Century Canadian Poetry (1953) indicates that he still had an appreciation for the value of the avant garde approach taken by the "Hellcats In Heaven" even though Birney referred it as: "fashionably obscure or highly experimental work which, however 'great' it may eventually turn out to be, can offer at the moment little of the food of the imagination except to the very sophisticated palate."[73] Again as Alexander St. John Swift, Dudek published his "Little Review" of Birney's anthology in CIV/n 5:

> In his anthology, Mr. Earle Birney
> Is his own judge, jury and attourney;
> Twenty-one pages of his staunchless song
> Argue that all the others had been wrong;
> But half-page poets, gasping at the lyre,
> When he sings high, would hang him even higher.

In CIV/n 6, George Walton satirized the lack of craftsmanship he thought characteristic of much modern poetry. His poem "Buttocks And Buttercups," inspired particularly by his reading of Layton's The Black Huntsman, makes the point as follows: "Only a few today / work at the trade

the way / poets did so they say / once on a time / when those brave, lusty men, / sealed of the tribe of ben, / met at the Mermaid when / poets dared to rhyme." Although they are not interested in discouraging experimental writing, both Walton and Dudek find it necessary to caution poets about the danger of mistaking formless sensationalism for good writing.

Apart from the satires, there are several poems in this group which discuss the nature of art by referring directly to the work of specific artists. Ralph Gustafson's "Epstein" (CIV/n 3), for example, sees the sculptor as a genius whose work deserves total public exposure so that people may better appreciate the significance of "clay" made "flesh." The ironic point of the poem is made in the final brief stanza which expresses the incongruity of housing such dynamic creations in a museum where we see: "Stuffed in a back room, / Jesus roped / And Lazarus / The burst of suns / Between his thighs."

Similarly, in "If He Swings It (for R.C.)" (CIV/n 6) Gael Turnbull appreciates the formal and structural craftsmanship of Robert Creeley who has escaped "the degradations / of a metronome" and created an "architecture / of pauses" which leaves its unique mark upon his poetry "like a footprint." Raymond Souster expresses a parallel appreciation for the value of laconic, economical use of language in "To The Welshman Who Drank With Dylan" (CIV/n 7). The entire statement is as follows: "The one thing we

had in common / Was a love of drinking. / But you forget a second- / (Almost as fatal) / Rhetoric." Phyllis Webb's "Elegy On The Death Of Dylan Thomas" which appeared in CIV/n 4, is, unlike Souster's poem, an impressionistic appreciation of Thomas as an artist and a man. Seen through the eyes of his son, Dylan Thomas becomes a man "green in his will / which swung out farther / than broken hills, / than his poems said." The tragic mood associated with his death is echoed and extended in "To W. H. Auden" which Phyllis Webb published in CIV/n 6. Here she questions the value of bringing art or children into a world where nothing is right:

> Knowing everything is wrong
> how can we go on giving birth
> either to poems or the troublesome lie,
> to children, most of all, who sense
> the stress in our distracted wonder
> the instant of their entry with their cry?

The answer to this question comes as a realization that everyone must create his own vision of the perfect world and circumscribe "the circle we would charm our children in." The fact that this private state of mind must substitute for the lack of perfection in the external world, in turn accounts for why both she and Auden must "frame . . . lonely poems in / the shape of a frugal sadness." The honest poet can neither be totally affirmative nor exhuberantly expansive in his response to the contemporary world even though physical survival demands that in life, some rationalization be found for meaningful existence. Idealism and optimism may be necessary to justify the purpose of bringing children into

the world but they are not qualities which characterize honest contemporary writing. Youthful idealism which has since lost its significance is the subject of John Sproston's "Walton Street Interlude" (CIV/n 4) in which the speaker, "Having tasted sherry with Stephen Spender," recalls with surprise that his early poetry appealed greatly to adolescents. Now that times have changed and the world demands a more realistic appraisal the speaker sees "only trees when looking at these trees," and he remembers that in the past the "grass . . . was another colour." Thus he is led to think not only of how Spender's attitude toward the function of poetry has changed, but also how the appeal that he once had can never be recaptured. It is with a degree of nostalgia then, that he contemplates the fate of poets in general who having outgrown their former enthusiasms have become "expatriates / from their sunlit incubation, never to return."

There are six poems that deal philosophically rather than directly or satirically with the nature of art and its relationship to society. All are concerned with the manner in which beauty is perceived and its effect upon the perceiver. In D. G. Jones's "Li Revived" (CIV/n 2), the speaker attempts "to fix [his] thoughts upon Li Po: how / Drunk upon the river, he drowned / When he tried too well / To put his arms around the moon." Although Li Po mistook the appearance of the reflection of beauty for the reality of it, his death actually occurred because he was so attracted to the beauti-

ful that he wanted to possess it completely. Jones suggests that even though his act may seem foolish to some, Li's intention was noble and sound because unlike Narcissus he fell in love with objective beauty rather than with a reflection of himself. In Eli Mandel's poem "Leda And The Swan" (CIV/n 1), the theme of the self as a source of the beautiful is also taken up. This time, however, a verbal assault in which ideas are imparted to the victim is construed as a rape. The speaker becomes the swan figure and the girl who submits to his ideas becomes Leda. The ironic point is that the speaker doesn't realize until the end of the poem that it is he who has caused the change in her, allowing her the insight to see that "daffodils were pretty when / With wings, not arms, they reached toward the sky."

"Dialectic To A Theme Of Villa-Lobos," which Ralph Gustafson published in CIV/n 2, suggests that the true value of the creation and experience of art lies in its tendency to lead men closer to an understanding of perfection. Although the music of Villa-Lobos can neither be heard perfectly by the human ear nor played perfectly by the mechanics of a piano, its beauty and significance can only be approached through performance: "Unheard music is not sweeter." Thus although "Reality is imperfection," the perfection which lies behind it can only be approximated through making or experiencing art. Unlike Li Po, who in Jones's poem wished to grasp perfect beauty suggested by the

reflection of the moon on the water, Gustafson is calmly aware that perfection in the form of God "sits beyond / the pearly gates twiddling his thumbs." This same idea is the subject of Don Clift's "Four Fragments" (CIV/n 2) which is a lengthy poetic discourse on the nature of the force and potency of language concluding as follows:

> Perhaps poetry has no more meaning
> Than the conventions which make it possible;
> There was never any such transcendency
> As that of Orpheus taming the Gates of Hell
> With the sudden awakening of his lyre,
> And yet the music is almost heard . . .

As in Gustafson's poem, the suggestion here is that despite its limitations, art is the means by which man most closely approximates perfection and the state of transcendence toward which he as a captive of the physical world strives. Much of the effect that the work of art has upon men may, therefore, be achieved on an emotional or subliminal level. Two other of Clift's poems deal more specifically with this aspect of the manner in which art is experienced. "Jazz" (CIV/n 1) observes that "Even those whose tastes are most polite / Will find they tire of Yeats and Dryden both: / An ivory spoon can scarcely stir the blood." But the freedom and improvisation associated with jazz appeals to more primitive emotional instincts shared by men of all cultural backgrounds and tastes. Thus jazz is seen as a levelling form of artistic expression which allows a wider and more varied appreciation of beauty. "Death Of A Prophet" (CIV/n 1) continues this theme of the effect that music has upon

physical and psychological nature of its listeners. Here it is the voice of a singer and her accompanying music which transcends the confusion of the dance-floor and causes everyone to reach a new level of emotional awareness in which "passion like an intense monochrome / Darkens in the recesses of the limbs."

Thus the CIV/n poems dealing with the nature of art are of several types. There are those offering advice or a warning about the subject and form of contemporary poetry; those which delve into the work of particular artists in order to make general observations about the relationship between art and society; and finally, poems which approach art philosophically by exploring ways in which it allows people to gain an insight into perfection through the experience of beauty. Although these poems reflect CIV/n's concern with the aesthetics of poetry itself, the fact that the magazine devoted the largest amount of space to poems based on social rather than aesthetic subject matter suggests that the editors were more concerned with defending the integrity of the individual in a degrading, philistine society than with discussing the nature of art itself.

Two CIV/n poems of this second type attempt to answer the question "Où Sont Les Jeunes?" which Dudek first posed in his introductory editorial to Contact magazine. Avi Boxer's "Ou Sont Les Jeunes? (to L.D.)" appeared in CIV/n 1 and states very simply that society has taught the young to develop "a craft / Which has / And serves / A public."

The craft therefore is not poetry. It is rather composed of skills to be practiced "In poolrooms and brothels." Although the youth of the country have no interest in higher forms of culture, the poem implies that they are not entirely to blame. Their values and interests merely reflect the superficial norms of the society in which they have been raised. Leonard Cohen, however, sees the young through more critical eyes. Bored and valueless, they are capable of reverting to destructive barbarism and primitive rituals as "An Halloween Poem To Delight My Younger Friends (Ou Sont Les Jeunes?)" published in CIV/n 4 illustrates. Here the children dressed in crepe-paper costumes are ritually burning live pigeons for their own pleasure. They have lost their sensitivity to the meaning of life and the passive, frog-like houses which watch them perform their cruelty suggest that society itself is oblivious to the potential for evil lurking within its offspring. Thus both poems depict the young as being spiritually distant from the ideals embodied in Dudek's editorial. In Boxer's view they are motivated by the insignificant values of "the poolrooms and brothels." In Cohen's poem they are associated with more primitive instincts which lead them beyond complacency toward destruction and violence. The poems imply a harsh criticism of contemporary society for causing its youth to be spiritually barren. These poems represent one kind of social criticism common in CIV/n. By discussing the manner in which representative individuals act in certain social situations

emphasis is placed upon the dehumanizing nature of society itself. Variations on this technique appear in other poems by Cohen, Souster, Robert Rogers, Phyllis Webb, Gael Turnbull, Ian Clark, and William Fournier.

In "Les Vieux" (CIV/n 5), for example, Cohen looks upon the derelicts of Montreal with genuine compassion:

> Northeastern Lunch,
> with rotting roses and tweed caps,
> huddling in thick coats
> and mumbling confidential songs
> to ancient friends-
> the public men of Montreal
>
> and in parks
> with strange children
> who listen to sad lies
> in exchange for whistles
> carved from wet maple branches;
>
> in Phillips Square,
> on newspaper-covered benches,
> unaware of Ste. Catherine Street
> or gray and green pigeons
> inquiring between their boots-
>
> public men,
> spitting blood in crumpled handkerchiefs
> twisting fingers against brittle years.

Cohen emphasizes that these are "public men" in order to show that society accepts their presence and their aimless, lonely existence as a natural part of its structure. Society has generalized them and destroyed their integrity as individuals in order to avoid facing the responsibility of providing them with the opportunity to live meaningful lives. Raymond Souster's "Mrs. Smith" (CIV/n 5) eulogizes a scrubwoman who has worked hard all her life only to die from cancer. Her long service and her death, of course, have gone unnoticed by the people whose offices she cleaned every

night and it is only the poet who recognizes her integrity and grieves at her death, assuring her that "nobody works in heaven."

In Robert Rogers's "Fellow Passenger" (CIV/n 5) the subject is a drunken Indian who although "Not a good father, / perhaps / in the economic sense," is in his own way a protective parent and a creative human being. The speaker watches him board the bus with his squaw and their son and, at first, sees him only as a social stereotype whose "soft, Indian voice / rose like an irregular fountain, / covering the length of the bus / with splashes of conversation, / giving orders to his son and squaw / boasting how much cordwood he could cut." But by noticing details, the observer becomes aware of the unique personality and genuine humanity which lies beneath the apparent surface. In the beautifully made "green and yellow" basket he carries the speaker sees evidence which transforms "this nondescript tramp / into a craftsman;" and he recognizes in the way he takes his son onto his knee "a father's gesture of protection." Rogers, like Cohen and Souster, wishes to make the reader aware of the integrity of the individual in a society which types him and robs him of his individuality.

Phyllis Webb takes up this theme from a different perspective in "New Year Message For J. Alfred Prufrock" (CIV/n 1). Here she warns that although the Prufrock's of society think they have become "smartened up" after so many years of experience, they have really only substituted one

kind of victimization for another. Thus she observes: "The road is long for you, Mr. Pru / frock, in 1952." The problems of self-determination and the fear of honestly expressing one's feelings expressed during the 1920's have not disappeared in the society of the 1950's. Webb currently finds Prufrock's "bright / politics . . . quartered in the socio- / sexual structure of the corner bank," and even though he now takes "tea aware with lemon / and run(s) to shun the measurements / of coffee," she knows that he is still very far from being a free, spontaneous person. The real tragedy however is that he is no longer aware that he remains a victim of a dehumanizing society.

Gael Turnbull published several poems of this type in CIV/n. All except "June Nineteenth- Rosenberg's Executed- Riots In East Berlin" (CIV/n 3), are brief glimpses of the way in which various individuals have become victims. In "Psychologist" (CIV/n 2) the speaker hesitantly mocks the possibility that he is "controlled / Entirely by something called / My infant ego." He objects to the theory that rather than having free will the individual's actions are determined by "an effect / of something I can't recollect." The same issue of the magazine included "Murdered" and "Counsel." In the former poem Turnbull presents a brief dramatic dialogue between lovers. However, their declared love for one another is hollow and grotesque for she is "a bitch" whom he wishes were dead. "Counsel" offers the following advice to a contemporary who is constantly engaged

in a futile attempt to change the world: "Don't rupture yourself / Tilting against windmills. / They'll fall despite you / If the timber is rotten." The speaker continues by saying that it is more important to build new foundations than try to destroy the old ones because in their society, protection is what is needed "For the barbarians are coming." Three poems appeared in CIV/n 7 which depict the manner in which other victims of society attempt to resolve their problems. These people have been driven to despair rather than rebellion. In "The Drunk," Turnbull presents the confession of a man whose life has fallen into total confusion. He has "stayed up all night," "gobbled"his meals, and "gone to the office / with different colored socks / and [his] fly buttons open." And even though he says in the last line: "I haven't touched a drop for months," there is no doubt that his alcoholic condition is permanent and that he constantly lives with the knowledge that he is not free and will one day be forced back into the chaos from which he has temporarily emerged.

"The Escapist" portrays another way in which people attempt to avoid the problems of life. Here the speaker's dilemma arises from the need to discover excuses which will account for his feelings of inadequacy. However, because he can find none, he has no one to blame but himself and this he has great difficulty accepting:

> I have supposed my parents would dispossess me,
> that my wife would be a shrew
> and my children idiots—

I have supposed I would become bedridden
that my friends would turn against me
and my poems never be read—
but none of this has happened
which is more difficult.

Instead of escaping into the oblivion of alcohol or attempting to rationalize one's shortcomings as the results of influences over which one has no control, the speaker in "Suicide" has become the ultimate victim. After all his meagre attempts to justify his existence have failed and he has found nothing of which he can be certain, he decides to end his life by putting his head in the oven. But it is in "June Nineteenth- Rosenberg's Executed- Riots in East Berlin" (CIV/n 3) that Turnbull makes his most complete statement about the relationship between man and his society. In this poem he questions his own reasons for living by juxtaposing his personal security and comfort with the suffering and sacrifice of the Rosenbergs and the rioters in Berlin. The fact that they are willing to die for their beliefs implies that their lives have had direction and meaning. Thus, even though they are victims, they have transcended the chaos surrounding them. The speaker, on the other hand, has no such faith which brings purpose to his life. He too is a victim, but a victim who is a member of a society founded upon conformity, complacency, and pedestrian clichés.

Two other writers, Ian Clark and Robert Fournier, express similar views in poems which appeared in CIV/n 5. Clark's "2 Headed Tot Is Shut Away From Curious" emphasizes

the timidity with which society approaches anything that is new, abnormal, or unique. He sees the two-headed child not as an example of imperfection which should be avoided and hidden away, but as a Christ-figure whose birth should be publicly proclaimed. His strangeness is to be welcomed because he is "double-tongued to speak the truth, / Janus-like to rule the earth." This world of conformity in which the integrity and uniqueness of the individual man is suppressed is depicted in more intimate detail by William Robert Fournier. "Monsieur Caplan N'est Pas Dans Son Bureau" describes the emotional atmosphere associated with the tension, uncertainty and subservience of the potential job applicant as he waits "in the crucible of lunch time [amid] a cacaphony of marching spoons" for the interviewer to return to his office. With his fate in someone else's hands, the speaker understands his circumstances very well. He is only one of thousands who have come to realize that: "I am a stranger, I am he who must prove / His soul in a volume of pragmatic evidence." These feelings of insignificance and entrapment are also explored in the poem "Cul-De-Sac" which appeared in the same issue of the magazine. Here the victim is a man without money or friends adrift in the urban world of bars, movie theatres, and coffee shops. Existing "Between a sigh and a shudder," he can only hope that tomorrow will somehow provide a means of escape from the dead-end he is facing. A similar situation is described in "Good Friday In Montreal" (CIV/n 6). Again Fournier's speaker is an

unemployed drifter who, in this case, finds life particularly insufferable on Good Friday. Despite the tone of self-pity and the rather easy irony of associating his condition with that of Christ's agony, the poem leaves the reader with a portrait of the lost victim who "wail(s) through the blank pages / Of unemployment / In search of life and purpose." Fournier's final poem, which appeared in CIV/n 7, is a more general expression of this disillusionment which characterizes his understanding of the human condition. As the title suggests, his state of mind is one of "Autumn In A Cold Climate" and therefore he can no longer share his self with his "beloved." His advice to her is that she search out someone more receptive to her advances and that she "flaunt her delights / on warmer lands / on kinder people / on conjugal, more wanton spirits." Thus Fournier's poems, like the others of this type which have been discussed, criticize society indirectly by showing how various individuals have become dehumanized victims of it. There is another group of poems of this type which criticize society more directly by referring to the collective injustices and the superficial values which define society as a whole. Instead of focussing upon the anxieties and weaknesses of particular individuals, these poems focus upon the corrupt moral character of the society in which these individuals exist.

An example of this distinction can be seen in Avi Boxer's "Quebec" which appeared in CIV/n 1. Unlike his previously discussed "Ou Sont Les Jeunes?" which showed the

young as a generation interested only in poolrooms and brothels, "Quebec" presents a criticism of the whole culture of the province: "Cursed with an Oka-liver system / This padlocked province / . . . Flaunts at each / Laurentian dawn / His disregal fleurs-de-lis." The society is "padlocked" not only by the restrictive policies of Duplessis, but also by "the business fox Apollo / Who flattering parliamentary vultures / Runs off with the Savior's face." Commercialism has become the new religion with Duplessis as its high priest and, in a manner reminiscent of the left wing poetry of the Thirties, Boxer leaves the reader with a final cartoon-like image of the social situation:

> From the loftiest spire
> Pink-gloved Duplessis, in natty tie,
> Pilots his money-bagged eyes
> At the serious nuns
> Descending the bone-white stairs
> Of the doomed gospel.

Thus, Boxer's poem is characteristic of a group of poems in the magazine which aim their criticism directly at the social, spiritual, and political problems that have victimized the individual and fostered cultural anaemia.

Two poems by Don Forth published in CIV/n 1 are further examples of this type. In "High Finance" he emphasizes the spiritual bankruptcy of society by representing God as a banker from whom everyone pilfers. The result is that "when the month ends and we come / To pay our bills, / He looks into his ledger and sees there / That we / And almost he / Are broke." The intrusion of the modern world of commerce and technology into the more significant spiritual

areas of human awareness is also the subject of "Skywriter." In this poem the speaker's appreciation of the sky as his "lemonade" in which "The Sun's my lemon," is corrupted by the intrusion of a skywriter who arrives to "Spill streams of curdling milk upon / My glass- my sweet delight." The contrived metaphor is forced to the limits of absurdity in the final moral resolution but the social message is certainly made clear: "Fool, I thought, dost think that thou / Canst add one drop / Of flavour from a metal cow?" Slightly less heavy handed and more genuinely satirical are the poems that Robert Currie contributed to the magazine.

In "How Black Was My Cadillac" (CIV/n 6), Currie uses spring as a means to discuss the subject of urban expansion and commercial development which destroys the natural environment for the sake of progress. The satiric title echoes the connotations of "How Green Was My Valley" and the theme of innocent beauty laid waste is carried through quite directly: "But construction is the cruel foe / that frightens the flowers / and threatens to lay them all / waste with wanton contempt." Again, the suggestion is that society's values have been corrupted and misdirected and the final personification of dandilions staring "blankly at an / orange bulldozer / dozing / in the sun" is a multiple image of a physical and spiritual contemporary wasteland dominated by powerful mechanical beasts. Currie continues this theme in the poems describing the social atmosphere of Montreal. In "Montreal" (CIV/n 7) he likens the empty-eyed people who

inhabit the city to clusters of grapes "on the end of a distended vine." The city, with its "dry heat of dusty streets" shrivels and crushes its people like "a bitter press for sour wine." The crushed men are thus the products of an environment where "There is no love / Where brownstone turns gray / wood to concrete / and grass to neon." In the end they are pictured as hopeless people deprived of meaning who "flutter from their calendar daily / in tearless unison." Just as the Montreal depicted in this poem has failed to nourish its citizens, so the society in "Montreal 1954" (CIV/n 5) is described as being caught up in a spiritual drought. It is a society whose "system wants moisture." Here, however, the drought has brought sickness and transformed its victims into mindless humanoids:

> Traffic moves sluggishly through the main arteries
> Like swarms of silvery motile spirochetes
> As the spreading sickness starves the various cells
>
> Within the cells drugged deltas they
> Consult their Sun Life calendars
> To discover it's January and then
> Sit comatose before TV screens . . .

These are the same people who fail to communicate with one another in "Shibboleth" (CIV/n 5). Even though the people in this poem "speak crisply, / if hurriedly" their dialogue fails to unlock "the meaning imprisoned in the words" and they remain isolated and alone. One way of attempting to achieve even a semblance of community in such a society is to join the army, and Currie has two poems which deal with individuals who have taken this course. In "L for Dunkhead"

(CIV/n 6) the recruit who has "screwed up [his] sphinctre / and 'joined the team'" is not ennobled by his experience nor is he any closer to an awareness of the true values which are often learned from being involved in life and death situations. Instead of having discovered the "proper" way to die, he is a man whose "thoughts stayed grey." Even the action of battle cannot change him from what he was before he became a soldier and the final image in the poem is an ignoble picture of a man who, despite his experiences, has learned only "the proper way to . . . / sit glazed in the / Queens Brasserie and watch / a squiffed waaf squat on the table / and piss in your hat." This same "grey" state of consciousness is echoed in "For My Friend Duke Who Was A Draftdodger" (CIV/n 7). The poem describes the fate of two men, one of whom escaped the war "through a damaged sinus," and another who "wandered into a uniform / smiled at the mirror and crowded his way / through four whoring years, collecting / campaign ribbons / and cognac labels." But, again, neither has benefitted or grown in moral stature from his experiences. In the end, "Duke continues to laugh at the goats / and writes rimes that make his masters uneasy . . . [while] Stanky belongs to the Canadian Legion." None of the speakers in these poems are able to transcend the narrow limits of awareness imposed upon them by society before they encountered their military experience. Thus they remain mindless victims, incapable of hearing the voice of their consciences. The persona in Howard Sergeant's "The

Voices," however, is able to do so:

> Again and again I have heard their voices
> rising, like a cold and terrible wind
> above the trees of Europe, whose leaves wear
> the puzzled faces of children and fall
> grotesquely, unbearably, as children fall,
> their frail white arms flung wider than a cross.

This conscience which feels universal guilt because of the injustices of war is not shared by Currie's soldiers but it is felt obliquely by the speaker in Eli Mandel's "Doll On The Mantlepiece" (CIV/n 7). In this poem, however, the speaker is unable to clearly formulate his response to the meaning of human injustice. As a member of post World War II society, his awareness is only slightly more acute than that of the speakers in Currie's poems. The Dresden doll on the mantlepiece standing "still, chill, white" above the flames in the fireplace leads the observer to a question for which he should have an answer but doesn't:

> Why do I think of clowns, of emperors,
> Of Nietzsche in his tower and all Berlin
> Falling in flames while this silly doll
> Stands on a fire, calm beside a frozen hill?

Like his people in "City Park Merry Go Round" (CIV/n 1), Mandel's speaker here is unable to think or act with conviction and independence. Along with the other social victims in the CIV/n poems, the merry-go-round people are caught in a meaningless cycle:

> Mostly you circle round and round the park.
> You'd give your life now to be free to leave.
> Freedom is seldom what you now believe.
> Night follows day, these horses never leave.

Mandel uses a modification of this metaphor in "City State" (CIV/n 7), a poem which returns to the more direct criticism

of society characteristic of the poetry presently under consideration. The speaker here describes his social situation as an existence between the "twin spectres" of the "comic mechanic" and the "tragic academic" which represent the cultural boundaries of the city state of the Fifties. Between them there is only chaos represented by the sound of "Cars and the moan / Of their choric rhetoric."

The deadening, dehumanizing nature of contemporary society depicted here is not far from the "1984" world which Gael Turnbull describes in his poem, "In Memory Of George Orwell" (CIV/n 2). It is also very similar to the atmosphere that D. G. Jones describes in "November, Gananoque" (CIV/n 1); an ugly world where black coal sheds beside the lake are licked by "sluttish waves" and "houses grow like a petrified garden / Grave and granite in a sterile sky." The only evidence of humanity comes, as in Mandel's "City State," from the sound of automobiles which here are circling endlessly around the track in "a mammoth stock-car race" across the bay in Alexandria New York. R. S. Edgar evokes a similarly sterile atmosphere in his poem "Snow" (CIV/n 2). Although the imagery is drawn from nature rather than the urban environment, his lament for a society which has lost its purpose and compromised its ideals is familiar: "Once / in a sticky green dawn / (twenty years gone) / we raised loud voices / to theories and plans / and we hoped. / But now / in the snow / soft and silent / we only turn away." The new values which direct men's lives in the Fifties are the subject

of F. R. Scott's "Sonnet" which appeared as follows in CIV/n 6:

> Take a look at the Sat Eve Post,
> Get a load of its slick ads
> That have turned our ancestors to Mums and Dads
> And reduced living to the art of making toast.
> Have an eyeful of its long slim girls
> Selling themselves with whiskey and lipstick and cars
> To any man whose destruction is drinking in bars
> Using a dictaphone, or buying false pearls.
>
> Hail to the Huckster! Knight errant of our time!
> See him ride to war for the barons of soap.
> Perpetually storming the castles of the home.
> This gives our bathrooms a touch of the sublime!
> So be not discouraged, never give up hope,
> And please— no escaping to Moscow or Rome.

Scott's satire, focussing directly upon the manner in which the moral values of society have been corrupted by the negative influences of advertising and commercial enterprise, is an ideal example of the type of direct social protest poetry advocated by CIV/n.

Layton, Souster and Dudek also contributed poems of this type to the magazine and a consideration of their work will serve as a conclusion to the discussion of poetry based upon overt, social criticism. Layton's poems attack and condemn the contemporary philistine culture with characteristic satire and invective. In "Street Funeral" (CIV/n 1), for example, the poet cynically reflects upon the life of the anonymous person whose body is being carried to the cemetery. He sees the funeral as the final rest of a man "Tired of holding down / a job; of giving insults; / of excited fornication, / failing heart valves . . ." and he wonders, simply, if he is glad "that after all the

lecheries, / betrayals, subserviency, / after all the lusts, / false starts, evasions" that the "long adultery / with illusion" is over. Layton imagines that the man has lived a life typical of the times and generalizes through him upon the redundant, futile condition of modern man. Layton despises the fact that life is so often reduced to a dependence upon illusion and sham and he frequently associates the perpetuation of these false values with a bourgeois mentality. Layton continues his attack upon all institutions which stifle the free expression of emotion and intellect in "Prologue To The Long Pea Shooter" (CIV/n 6). He is particularly harsh on ambitious poets who care only for fame and favorable reviews and academic "pimps" (reviewers) who stifle freedom of speech. He finally attacks popular writers in general including Eliot and the Canadian Governor General's Award winners, Reaney, Birney, Livesay, Finch, Pratt, Le Pan, and Anne Marriott as outdated perpetrators of imitative bourgeois cultural attitudes:

> Of all sad things, the saddest sight
> Are pubic hairs turned grey and white,
> Or thinned by age, a spiritless down,
> Ranged like a battered dusty crown
> Or a harbour broken at the centre
> Where no boat shall leave or enter.

In "Mr. Therapis" (CIV/n 4) bourgeois smugness is made into a mockery when the people who follow the example of their idol finally lose all perspective on reality and perform a ritual act upon him which the poet describes in detail:

> And there before my horror struck eyes
> They snipped off his balls

And plated them with chromium
Into a pair of handrails.

Now when they go up and down
They feel his touch, and kiss,
And love the world with the tested vigor
Of Mr. Ther-Apis.

Layton's rebellion against the obtuse sterility of middle-class values is further expressed in "Me, The P.M., And The Stars" which was published in CIV/n 5. Here the poet engages in breaking the window of "a cottage marbling white / in one of the better suburbs of Montreal." He throws a lump of coal imbedded in a snowball through the glass and dares the inhabitants to retalliate by calling the Prime Minister. His small act of violence against the symbol of the values he hates creates confusion and brings the bewildered people to the door, but he knows that they are powerless to do anything about the situation. Like the Prime Minister who shares their attitudes, they are unable to take simple, positive action. Only the poet, the iconoclast, is capable of such deeds.

Despite his interest in Contact at this time, and his previously discussed opposition to the wishes of Layton and Dudek for more editorial power on that magazine, Souster published several poems in CIV/n. It is interesting that for the most part these poems are casual observations and occasional, topical pieces of writing much in the spirit of the work Dudek proposed should be allowed in the pages of Contact. Souster would not accept such contributions for his magazine nor did he publish anything of the kind in it

himself but he did not hesitate to take advantage of CIV/n's more liberal and socially oriented editorial policy for this purpose. In "Rex Kenroth Visits Toronto" (CIV/n 3) for example, he imagines that Kenneth Rexroth is a visitor to Canada giving his objective views about the way in which the country has been influenced by America. "Canada and Canadians," he concludes, "seem to have drawn / from us the worst / features of the bourgeois / existence." It is only the visiting observer, however, who can avoid the traditional Canadian cultural myopia and smugness to observe that: "when they laugh at us / behind our backs the horse-laugh / is really on themselves." "Inquiry Into The Lack Of Greatness Among His Contemporaries" (CIV/n 2) is another criticism of Canadian society in general which briefly comments upon the low level of cultural awareness as follows:

> To have great poets
> there must be great audiences too (Whitman)
> which explains
> why we are such a lot
> of second-rate-sons-of-bitches?

This theme is carried further in "Fragmente Four" (CIV/n 1) when Souster proposes a reason to "Alfred" (likely Purdy) why the contemporary social situation will not allow "gay, laughing poetry, / proud, hopeful poetry" to be written despite the profusion of material wealth and abundance which surrounds them. This is because "it is precisely / all this wealth this abundance / that is forming the rot inside us / that is burning our love to hatred." One symptom of this sickness that the affluent North American society

has contracted is pointed out in "TV or Not TV" which also appeared in CIV/n 1. Here he sees the population seated before television screens which allow them to experience life vicariously. They "can see / on the magic screen / what it looks like / to live and laugh and die" without having to participate in life themselves. Thus, they are pictured in typical CIV/n fashion as a generation of people who are not only apathetic but also spiritually and emotionally dead. This image is carried through in three other of Souster's poems as well. In "Bay Street - for Hugh Garner" (CIV/n 1), he hopes that someday "the mayor will drive up / to the City Hall / with a visitor so hated" that the people will throw not only ticker-tape from the Bay Street windows but also the machines themselves so that "this corpse of a street / can really catch up / on its slow putrefaction." Similarly, in "Bay Street Lunch Counter" (CIV/n 4) he depicts the consumers of the business world as one giant stomach into which garbage is emptied every day. The total ironic absurdity of the value system by which the culture functions is depicted finally in "Rapid Transit" (CIV/n 4), a poem which is perhaps the perfect cliché for the type of social criticism which is most representative of the editorial tone of the magazine:

> Another two years and we are promised
> the most modern subway, enabling thousands
> of my fellow workers to get more quickly
> to their jobs downtown which they hate or despise
> and trample each other at night to escape from.

This cynical tone, usually in the form of satire, is

also characteristic of the poems that Louis Dudek contributed to the magazine. His work represents the kind of writing which he thought should be included in Souster's Contact but which Souster refused to print. That Dudek considered these poems as an important part of his canon is borne out by the fact that four of them later appeared in Laughing Stalks (1958), and all but three were chosen for his Collected Poems of 1971. One that did not appear in either collection but which is representative of the direct social criticism he was advocating at the time is "The World's A Stage" (CIV/n 1). The poem simply illustrates the manner in which the politicians of the United States, in particular, equate their involvement in Korea and the volatile situation of cold war with the Soviet Union to plays acted out on the world stage. Their blindness to the reality of their actions is further emphasized by the suggestion that "the political animals / who govern: / showbusiness, baseball, and money" can see no basic difference between these and the larger issues at stake on the international front. The topical references to "Panmunjom," "Kefauver" and "Taft," indicate clearly the kind of contemporary critical function Dudek felt poetry and CIV/n should serve. Dudek's other poems are similar in nature. "One World: 1952" (CIV/n 1), "Biology For Schools" (CIV/n 1), "Sunday Promenade" (CIV/n 2), "Metemparadogpsychosis" (CIV/n 1), and "Psychoanalysis" (CIV/n 6) all were later included in Laughing Stalks. In "One World: 1952" the poet is alarmed by the growing madness

he sees around him. It is a world in which "ordinary life is becoming uncomfortable / what with the number of madmen running about." The most dangerous of these are the "political gunmen" whose actions lead to the suspicion that there is some kind of unnatural "discord in nature" itself now that "the Atom's split / has ripped the universe, down to the bit fingernail." A further statement of the impossibility of believing in justice or relying on a faith in ultimate order is expressed in "Metemparadogpsychosis" (CIV/n 1). Here the universe is governed not by God but by his opposite in the figure of the "Great Dog" who rules with perverse injustice:

> A lady who had fed too many pigeons
> thought she'd turn into a dove
> when she died,
> but the Great Dog made her over into a she-cat
> who particularly loved
> to kill pigeons.

Both "Sunday Promenade" (CIV/n 2) and "Biology For Schools" (CIV/n 1) were published under Dudek's pseudonymn, Alexander St. John Swift, which was a name he took when dealing with more whimsical social satire. "Sunday Promenade," for example, presents a vision of the future which is triggered by seeing a procession of mothers walking their babies through the park: "Whale-sized madonnas / With their tiny Jonahs / Skinny mam'selles / Nursing teapot hells." This leads him to see the children as the next generation of adults who, sharing their parents' values, will become:

> Markets full of mouths
> Consumers massed in crowds,

Diapers full of jazz,
Comics, Tee Vee, Ads,
Future baseball fans
Holding in their hands
Soapsuds, Toothpaste, News—

The madness of consumerism prepetuated by parents and the aggressiveness of commercial enterprise is only one negative influence upon the younger generation. The school system and the timid, narrow minded teaching it encourages is also responsible for closing the minds of the young as "Biology For Schools" attests. Here the speaker tells the students that what they have actually gained from the fact that "The birds and the bees / Do as they please; / Kittens and dogs / Do it, and hogs / Never refuse" is not a lesson in animal sexuality but rather an insight into human nature:

But there goes the bell!
You've learned this, at least:
Between man and beast
There's a difference— it teaches
They do, but he preaches.

"Psychoanalysis" appeared in CIV/n 6 along with "Paideia" and "Notin Bot Kids." "Psychoanalysis" condemns by implication the contemporary social fad of using the psychoanalist as an emotional crutch. The process of psychoanalysis itself is seen as a way of rationalizing one's own weakness and lack of conviction. "Paideia" is simply a series of images which attempt to visually capture the essence of life in New York City. The most interesting of the three, however, is "Notin Bot Kids" in which Dudek attempts, with some success, to suggest the social atmosphere of the city through a recreation of the speech patterns of

people arguing in the street:

War fo yoleda gel beetyu op boy
MNOO EMOONOO
notin bot kids aroundea
Shoo By gimme atbolyu MAA-AAA
wy ya ledda gel beet yuop
wone playbol? heya boy
kemmer you kip datdog offemee si
Shi say "wot fo you leyin ol ovemee man . . .

These various responses to the chaotic society in which Dudek finds himself are synthesized into a more serious statement of his views on the problem in "London: Courtesy Is Pleasing" (CIV/n 5) which is a reprint of poem 33 from his then recently published poetic sequence, Europe (1954). In the poem Dudek praises the civility and order of the English society. Their culture, though more advanced than that of North America, is nevertheless falling into a similar state of decadence and decay but in light of the crude North American environment, Dudek observes that in England, "Courtesy is pleasing, saves us from barbarism." His conclusion, meant in earnest, is in sharp contract to the conclusions he comes to about North America in poems like "Notin Bot Kids," "Sunday Promenade," and "One World: 1952." Instead of brutality he sees gentility and refinement which he appreciates in the tone of a true Anglophile: "kindness is very welcome. / And what more pleasant than well-bred English people?"

Dudek attempts a much more detailed assessment of the human condition during the 1950's in "Provincetown" which appeared in CIV/n 7. It is appropriate that it appeared in the last issue because it is the "classic" example of CIV/n

poetic social criticism. The poem embodies in its six sections all of the various types of CIV/n poetry discussed thus far. It includes comments on the nature of art and its relationship to society combined with indirect social criticism which shows how various individuals are victimized by contemporary social and cultural values, and it offers direct criticism of society in general as well. Dudek begins part one, entitled "Resort Centre," with a statement of the universal dilemma which serves as the poem's central theme: "The problem / was to reconcile the public beaches / with the veritable Atlantic." It is in the incongruity between the polluted public beaches which are equated with the dominance of man and the vast elemental forces of the sea which are equated with the power of the natural universe that Dudek seeks a metaphor for understanding the world around him. The point is, that man seems to have dominated and corrupted even the sea itself with his presence: "Whatever they touch / is like them, those multi-arseholed / mass-mindless Americans / because they've been here, the sand is filthy the ocean / trivial." And it is precisely because modern man seems to be by nature an ignorant, corrupting being, incapable of seeing beyond the trivia of his consumer oriented environment that the poet becomes angry. At the end of part one he contrasts the relationship between the awesome forces of wind and water and the "dignity there is in a sculpted shell" with a portrait of contemporary man on the beach, blind to the beauty and meaning of the world

he inhabits:

> But for man, in a jockey cap,
> eating Tastee-Freez
> by a shore of beer-cans and waxpaper-
> nothing but shame
> a wave of impotent anger, and silence.

"Art Colony," which is part two of the sequence, suggests that modern man in America has a similarly corrupt attitude toward art, equating it too with the "Heinz Ketchup and Coca-Cola" aesthetic. Art has been reduced to a fashionable hobby anyone can practice and a popular item anyone can buy. "To be an artist in America," the poet says, "is almost compulsory." Almost as reprehensible as the false artist, however, is the legitimate artist who is too precious and abstract because in Dudek's view his motive is simply to gain "personal superiority" and "to be apart from the crowd." Thus, finding that man has also corrupted the aesthetics of true art, he turns again in a parenthetical statement at the end of the poem, to the natural world for an example of beauty and order:

> (O beautiful feather
> Fallen from a seagull's wing,
> you smell of the elements and the sweet society
> where you belong!)

The third part is "Fishing Village," and here Dudek associates the "old inhabitants" of the village with the natural, virtuous state from which man has fallen. Coming to their village as a tourist, the man of the Fifties is seen as a victim of the value system he himself has created; a system which has rendered him incapable of understanding the "honest people." "From them he can learn less than

nothing—/ not even the good manners / to bathe himself and leave the ocean clean." The only genuine dignity that contemporary man is associated with is his understanding of the significance of death and in part four of the poem, entitled "News," it is the accidental death of a boy who has fallen onto the wharf that creates a true bond between the people watching. In part six, "Avante Garde," Dudek concludes with a description of the more characteristic state of limbo which explains his vision of modern man as existing "in a void, / between the now and hereafter!" But it is the final lines of part five, "The Ocean," which best describe the ironic reality of the human condition. Despite his failings, man is in fact a masterful creator with vast potential to make both himself and his world better. His problem is that he has lost his perspective with regard to the true values of life and his relationship to the natural world. As in part one, Dudek first describes the life-giving power and infinite order of the sea from which all life emerged and then leaves the reader with a final thought which speaks ironically for his whole vision of humanity in Provincetown:

> I think of man,
> prone under striped umbrellas
> and oily with lotions,
> who has outdone the speed of the mackerel
> and the sea robin,
> has filed the tooth of the tiger
> and made a fibre of sharkskin: the winner,
> the wordy vanquisher
> of the streaming Kingdoms,
> of the armored, the swift, and sharp-clawed—
> man in a bathing suit,
> looking out over the ocean.

Although the purpose of reconciling the world of the public beaches with the "veritable Atlantic" has not been achieved, the poem does affirm a faith in man's potential to create a better society if he can somehow see the inadequacies of the one in which he is living. Dudek's poetry, and the majority of the poetry in CIV/n generally, attempts to emphasize the inadequacies of contemporary society through criticism and satire so that men may see it for what it is and change himself and his world for the better.

In addition to this large group of poems which tend to criticize society directly, there is a final group in CIV/n which reveal social problems through the personal, psychological states of mind which result from living in the cultural sterility of the modern world. Layton describes his particular state of mind in several poems, but with special effectiveness in "In The Midst Of My Fever" (CIV/n 3). His anxiety is evident from the outset: "In the midst of my fever, large / as Europe's pain, / the birds hopping on the blackened wires / were instantly electrocuted;" and this is followed by a series of similarly grotesque visions which arise from the confused, feverish state into which the troubled world has plunged him. His sickness becomes a "gay fever," however, after a miracle happens when "someone / quietly performed a good deed." The evidence that simple good deeds are still possible despite the selfishness and brutality of the world around him allows the poet to hope that the possibility of eventually being

at one with the universe, past and present, still exists. But in the end, this affinity with the rest of the world is not fully realized. It remains only a possibility and the final thought he has is of "Time's wretches" who have suffered "and of some / dear ones not yet dead / and Coleridge taking laudanum."

The professor in "Seven O'Clock Lecture" (CIV/n 2) is also suffering anguish and depression. This time, however, it is caused by his frustration at the impossibility of imparting the significance of poetry to the seven o'clock class. The students, steeped in the mundane trivia of every day life, are socially and morally insensitive to the beauty of art and the meaning of human suffering and deprivation. These are lost upon the class because their lives are essentially boring, secure, and comfortable. Thus he explains: "Gregor Metamorphosis, fantastic bogey louse, / you are without meaning to those who nightly / bed down on well-aired sheets." The lecturer's anger and frustration are expressed as follows:

> My heart is parted like the Red Sea.
> It cracks!
> And where the cleft is formed
> The BARBARI carrying their chronium gods
> on their sunburnt arms and shoulders
> Ride on my nightmares, a hot desert
> pushing them swiftly toward these faces
> washed clean of Death and Agony.

A mood of depression is also created in "The Buffaloes" (CIV/n 7). Here, the speaker's attitude is in keeping with the decaying atmosphere of Autumn which, echoing "The same dirge as last year," presents only falling leaves and a mist

which "Grips you like a friend's displeasure." But what grieves the speaker the most is the fact that his two buffalo trees, having been stripped of their leaves, "cannot kiss and close." The implication is that he too is a lonely and isolated victim in a dying world. A frightening awareness of one's own mortality is also the subject of "Saratoga Beach" and "On The Death of A. Vishinsky" both of which also appeared in CIV/n 7. In "Saratoga Beach" the poet says: "Knowing that the blade dies / Makes our kind unkind or wise / And writhe in the white fear / Of the death-knowing terror / Of the flukes that tunnel in / The human imagination." In order to overcome this state of mind, however, he attempts to give positive advice to others who have similar fears. The result is a satiric and platitudinous challenge for them to be "calm not harsh through bitterness / Of grass finitude / . . . Fresh and clanging as the sea. / Clear-eyed. / Truthful." Although the words are easy to say, the speaker's own inability to live by these principles exposes it as hollow advice. "On The Death Of A. Vishinsky" is a more sincere expression of his attitude. Here he describes himself as a frightened man "who lives by daily ruses / a desperate animal." When he hears "how quietly / the fluent Vishinsky died," he confesses that all of his long-winded attempts to "out-talk Death" are only exercises performed to hide the truth that his life, like everyone's, is very short.

Phyllis Webb published two poems in the magazine

which depict her personal state of anxiety. In "Pining" (CIV/n 3) she describes it as a pervasive feeling os loss: "Sense of loss / across / my hand- / it droops / to my side- / I stand / wilting / like some poor / summer flower / of tradition- / something less than / tragic, an act, / a mimic of the great, / the giant crack / in the spine, / the central agony." There is no specific reason why she feels this way but she does know that it will end only if she can achieve some kind of "cosmic break" rather than mere realizations which are only a "meddlesome / distortion / of the / fact." "Fera," which appeared in the same issue, observes that animals, unlike humans, have the good fortune to be free from such anxiety. They are able to "sleep the sleep / of the just / or just sleep" in peace. Modern man, however, is troubled in the night and is even more anxious when he wakes because his whole life style has become attuned to "guilt or fright." Anne Wilkinson is so overcome with this kind of world weariness that she says in "Poem" (CIV/n 7): "I am so tired I do not think / Sleep in death can rest me." The poem continues by describing the macabre vision of her restless bones moving and rattling in their coffin. In "Carol" (CIV/n 6), Wilkinson is likewise reduced to a state of remorse, this time because of lost love. The original relationship is described in terms of the Christmas season and her lover is seen as a decorated tree on which her heart is hung. Love, like the Christmas season, however, soon ends and the poem concludes with the tree stripped of all orna-

ments except her heart while a hangman ties holly around her neck. Part of the reason for the poet's unhappy view of herself in relation to the universe is suggested in "Items Of Chaos Any Week, Any Where" (CIV/n 5). In a world of chaos, no happiness is possible unless some means of understanding it in terms of order can be found. The hopelessness of this is expressed in the poem first through a series of grotesque incongruities: a toad living all summer in a bird's nest, a bullet breaking the windshield of her car, etc., and then more directly through her thoughts on the reasons for the birth of a deformed child. There is no explicable reason for the appearance of this new representative of a disordered universe and so she concludes in despair:

> Doctors are no wiser,
> 'Variations from the norm
> Are plentiful,' they say.
> 'But not explicable.'
> Sabbath voices drone
> 'In the sight of God, All
> His works are beautiful.

The state of depression which results from Wilkinson's view of the world is also dominant in the poems of Aileen Collins, the principal editor of CIV/n. "On the death Of An Existentialist" (CIV/n 6), for example, implies that the futility and frustration which leads to an existentialist philosophy of life is not really overcome by death. The ultimate existential experience, because death itself is merely a movement from "not knowing to unknowable." There can be no happiness when life and death are equally uncontrol-

lable. In "Renewal" (CIV/n 3), the attempt to overcome this anxiety by psychoanalysis which asks the person to "Toss your frustrations on the nearest chair / Place your neuroses neatly on a shelf, / Wash out your inhibitions and hang them up to dry" is also shown to be hopeless because of the necessity of living in an unhealthy society. There can be no renewal if society continues to produce inhibited, frustrated neurotics. Regardless of the rationalizations which allow one to "sink into a sleep where all is sane, logical, safe," the individual must always awake to face again that which is called:

> . . . life
> Its bright, alive, lurid and loathesome nightmare:
> Where loudness of voice, power, not intelligence
> Or justice dominate;
> Stenches arise from unaired
> Minds rancid with petty fears, conventions, covering
> Before all newness, clear thinking.

The final example of this type of poem which reveals the state of mind of the society of the Fifties through personal, psychological confession, is Lu Seymour's "Dead End" (CIV/n 5).- Here the speaker is a housewife, alone with her children at a Muskoka cottage during the summer vacation. Her depression is brought about by a state of inertia: "All day I have sat scarcely moving / my hands lie on my lap like peeled bananas left on a / shelf to rot / I do not remember cooking meals." The question she asks herself as night falls can be seen as a paraphrase of the dilemma common to all of the people of these poems, who, troubled deeply by the chaos of their social environment and

the apparent meaninglessness of their lives, can only hope that somehow they may be redeemed: "It is night now . . . if there be reason will I find it here / behind the Muskoka-dark curtain of pine trees roofed / with a fretwork of stars . . ."

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the social function of art advocated by the editors and promoted by the critical articles in CIV/n is given practical expression in the poetry which Canadians contributed to the magazine. The great majority of them are directed toward improving the social environment of the Fifties and the poet is seen as a critic of life whose art may serve in some measure to enlighten a society which has become culturally and spiritually barren. It is also evident that this attempt has been made primarily through the publication of four types of social poetry: that which inquires into the nature of art and its relationship to society; indirect social criticism showing how individuals are victimized by the prevailing system of social, political and cultural values; overt criticism of the institutions and morals of society in general through the use of satire and invective; and finally, through personal, psychological poems which reveal the anxieties of people living in such a world. There are, however, twenty-one poems in which this social function is not prominent. Even though they constitute a small part of the considerable body of work published in the magazine, a study of CIV/n which did not mention them at least briefly,

would be incomplete.

Six of these poems use birds as their central image. Leonard Cohen's "The Sparrows" (CIV/n 7), which sees the departed birds as traitors and their fall migration as a betrayal, is the most successful of the group. The sparrows which remain during the winter are poor substitutes for the more beautiful birds that have disappeared leaving only their "hollow nests . . . between wire branches." But the birds become symbolic of the changing state of mind of the lovers in the poem for whom it cannot always be summer either. And finally they are able to see the sparrows as "precise ghosts of departed summer birds," remembering their brighter colors more vividly and imagining the spring when they will return: "the sparrow's dimmest flutter of a coloured wing / excites all our favorite streets / to delight in imaginary spring." Whereas Cohen is impressionistic and abstract in his approach, Mortimer Schiff is willing to draw a direct parallel between the human condition and the life of young birds when he comes to the moralistic conclusion in "Bird Nest With Young" (CIV/n 7), that: "Perhaps man's life is just this summer rhythm / bird life and bird death, big mouthed / bird hunger of the young, nothing more." In "Boreas" (CIV/n 2) Avi Boxer sees in "This magnanimous sparrow lying dead / In my hand," a significance greater than that of the north wind which has killed it. Thus he demands: "Boreas, you crazed orator! / Shut your blasting mouth / for one moment, and witness your greatness." Seeing

some significance in the fact that birds fall victim to predators as well as the natural elements, F. C. Fyfes in "Cat" (CIV/n 2) humorously proposes the following method whereby people can gain a measure of revenge for them as well as some sadistic pleasure: "O think of birds / now / red / feather / on rough tongue / and then / kick with justice!" Fyfes also published a poem entitled "Flight" in CIV/n 5 which lyrically appreciates the swift and graceful movements of the swallow. This time, 19th Century poetic diction such as: "out o' the west . . . wheeled by the compass / of born fliers / on the whistling curve of / coronet blown song " suggests that his intention is not entirely serious. In a similarly light vein is Souster's "The Birds" which appeared as follows in CIV/n 6:

> In these parts (damn 'em)
> they start coaxing up the dawn at 5 a.m.
> and then after all this extravagant fanfare
> it usually rains
> or is eighty-five in the shade.

Souster has two other occasional poems which record his personal reactions to a trivial occurrence. "The New Mattress" (CIV/n 7), for example, laments the fact that the "long valley . . . / that I rolled down / to the twin towns of your breasts . . . / is now a plain / flat and monotonous." In "The Gypsy And The Drunk" (CIV/n 2) the poet tries to capture in words the significance of his passing glimpse of a gypsy girl propositioning a "young kid" on her doorstep. The description is a failure, however, because his car passes too quickly and he loses "him and the girl/ look of

the street and its strange / unexplainable moment / and somewhere with it the poem."

Avi Boxer also contributed two other poems to the magazine. These are confessional in nature, revealing his emotions and state of mind at particular moments in time. "Saturday Night" (CIV/n 4) describes the world as it appears to him while he is drunkenly making his way home. The poem is too self-indulgent to be successful, and similes such as "Head spinning like a helicopter propellor," "Time like an ashtray / will gather my loves and hates," "I falter like a cross-carrying Jesuit, gyrating / like a warped Stravinsky record," indicate the extent to which the poem is over-written. The speaker in "1:00 A.M. (To Vena)" (CIV/n 1), on the other hand, is a pining lover who sees himself standing "like / An O Bleak shadow / In Hamlet's dream / Watching a hay beam / Pass through the curtainless windows."

Both Irving Layton's "Love The Conqueror Worm" (CIV/n 1) and Marianne Macdonald's "The Rebel" (CIV/n 2) are poems based upon the poet's response to nature. Layton takes the imminent approach of autumn as an opportunity to reflect upon the relationship between life and death. In mid-August he imagines the cicadas as stage managers who "Apprise the scene-shifters / Where each prop goes" in preparation for the changing season but the poet, with a lingering sensation of ripeness and vitality, feels "lofty for the spinning year" and consents to "pardon Nature her insanities" and

forget her insistence that death be given continual importance. Thus he turns his mind from nature's advice to "love the conqueror worm" and chooses to "praise these oaks" for their stubborn longevity as they "stand each winter these / Like courtly masochists / Whimpering "Encore! Encore!"

Marianne Macdonald, in "The Rebel," makes use of nature in a spirit similar to that of Layton. Rather than choosing to see in nature an affirmation of life, however, she sees that nature has provided an opportunity for self-expression. Her pattern of footprints in the unbroken snow becomes a metaphor for rebellion in that they affirm the ability of the individual to change and re-order the world:

> Under a moving sky
> clouds whipped
> Today, I broke
> Across wire fence
> to snow touched
> by the winds' wandering fingertips
> only, and left a ritual
> of circled footprints
> crossing inevitable crosshatch
> light and shadow
> on the drift:
> beside the ploughed road
> broken snow.

In "Fables" (CIV/n 3) Miriam Waddington expresses a positive reaction to the seasonal change from summer to autumn in much the same way that Layton does in "Love The Conqueror Worm." The poem begins with an epigram which implies the necessity of seeing the certainty of death as a reason for living as completely as possible while time permits: "Where life the lance is death must be the spur / And through such opposites events occur." The poet's elation

with the beautiful colors of autumn, however, quickly gives way to despair when she realizes how "Decisively it leads into what's next . . . and collides / With October." October brings on depression because it is a season of "dying" and loneliness" in which the indifference of the natural universe is most evident: "Ah, those rushing waters / That could drown without a sorrow / Any little stone / Or little boy / Who was lost alone." But despair is overcome through positive, vital action and instead of responding to the approach of October with disillusionment, she chooses to run with more abandon than ever "along the endless beach / of August" in order to affirm the significance of life in the present rather than brood upon death in the future. Thus the speaker emerges from her "long no-seeing" and chooses to move "Into instant white / And from my long no-feeling plunge / into clear delight."

Two other of these poems which are not based primarily upon a social incentive are Leonard Cohen's "Poeme En Prose" (CIV/n 4), and A. J. M. Smith's "Astraea Redux" (CIV/n 6). Cohen's poem is intended to recapture through reverie a mood formerly associated with since departed friends. This is accomplished through an impressionistic reminiscence of the past evoked by revisiting the banks of the Charles river where:

> Undulations swarmed the shadows of ten dozen streetlamps and
> a moon. Here and there, stone bridges clasped the banks and
> held the water like segments of a bruised worm. And we, small

as Chinese mystics in a swirl of landscape, confused the
light
with our pebbles, broke it into spirals . . .

The poem contrives this sensual description in the lush, exotic language and startling juxtapositions which two years later characterized his first collection, Let Us Compare Mythologies (1956).

In "Astraea Redux (for Kim and Doug Jones)" A. J. M. Smith is also concerned with evoking a mood. This time it is associated with his actual return to the companionship of friends whom he hasn't seen for some time. His description of them as "the good people / known anew / . . . always . . . now / Royalists," however, makes his security in the thoughts of himself as their restored monarch seem rather pompous. This is particularly true when Dryden's poem of the same name, dedicated to the restoration of King Charles II, is recalled. It is interesting to note that Smith, perhaps to alter this impression, modified the poem before it appeared in Poems New And Collected (1967). In the later version it was subtitled "Keawaydin Poetry Conference" and he acknowledged, in a less serious tone, that there were others present who were almost his peers:

My people lordly ones
the Duke of Dudek His grace of Layton
and with me Scott
diaconal, archbishopric
twisted benevolent
with needle eye 74.

D. G. Jones published four poems in the magazine dealing with the universal subject matter of mutability and death in a world which is often harsh and bleak. "January"

(CIV/n 5), for example, expresses the motif of the season in terms of cold and blackness: "Winter, night, and the moon is gone. / The winds pour in at the moon's hole, / And the cold beats, beats, like a drum." The northern night is seen in the form of a black tortoise which "Crawls out on the hills of stone / And moves South with his gleaming shell." From this point on, the poem depicts winter as a universal, timeless phenomenon which recurs in ritualistic cycles throughout history in the northern hemisphere. The season of winter is equated to the dark season that recurs in men's lives as well and the poem concludes with an image of an almost equally bleak dawn where: "the cold heart feeds on the sun." This same pessimistic view of both the human and the natural universe is echoed in Jones's other poems. In "Fall" (CIV/n 6), he is attracted by the sound of leaves falling in the darkness rather than the visual beauty of the autumn colors. The sound reminds him of mortality and the passing of time which he describes as: "Little squirrels of days / Scurrying in the dark grass / for the last nut of memory." The speaker also searches his memory in "Irregular Rhymes For Easter" (CIV/n 4). Confronted by the atmosphere of Easter as a peaceful April holiday where "chocolate rabbits lay their eggs / And giddy children trace them in the park," he attempts to become aware again of the true meaning of the occasion: "To grope for knowledge of some ancient birth." It is only possible, however, for him to realize how little Christ's sacrifice has meant

to men throughout history and particularly to his contemporary world which is seen as "the heavy husk of days / Spun from print of Easter sermons, / Spun from ads and the news of wars." Thus, April and Easter are not positively associated with rebirth and renewal. He sees instead, a world in which "The hard shell of grammar / Lies like a broken eggshell on the lawn."

The significance of human death is also the subject of "Sea Burial" which appeared in CIV/n 1. The mood of remorse and the sense of loss that the sailors experience at the death of their companion seems so pervasive that even the sky is "but a rag for weeping." But the sorrow soon disappears with the realization that life must go on despite death and "After four days, sunlight / appears / And the foam breaks white on the waves." Just as the sailors are able to come to an emotional acceptance of death, so the sea is able to purify and purge itself of the dead matter it receives. Thus the final lines of the poem affirm the fact that death is to be understood as a part of nature's process which signifies a beginning as well as an end:

> And the ocean gathers the rubbish, the
> tin cans, lightbulbs, the shit, bones,
> rings, and used contraceptives, the
> sapphires and seagulls and men. All
> descend the layers of water, sink
> down to rest on the ocean floor, there
> all are digested in the darkness, there
> all are absorbed in the man of the sea.
> After four days, the gulls burst
> Rose from the foam with dawn on their wings,
> While glittering spray leaps into the air
> The wave breaks clean,
> While tossing a lock of glittering hair
> The wave breaks clean.

While Jones's poems and the others of this final small group do not conform directly to the stated editorial and critical principles of the magazine, they can be seen as attempt to maintain poetry's function as a preserver of the integrity of language. Jones expressed his strong convictions about the importance of this function of poetry in his article "The Question Of Language Prostitution" in CIV/n 4 and distinguished between advertisers who use language in order to sell, and artists who use language in order to reveal universal truths. It has been shown that this faith in the ability of poetry to counterbalance the philistine influence of advertising and commercialism which were undermining the higher purpose of language and the cultural dignity it represents was one of the more important critical premises of CIV/n. By serving this end these poems are in keeping with the magazine's ideals and they emphasise, along with the majority of other poems which have been discussed, both the civilizing function and social purpose of poetry and the role of the poet as a culture-bearer whose art holds the potential to help society regain its awareness of the higher human values which mark an enlightened civilization.

Thus the CIV/n poetry provides a much clearer reflection of the magazine's critical principles than the Contact poetry provided with regard to its critical attitudes. Souster's magazine tended toward an interest in poetic experimentation based on the aesthetic theory of Corman,

Creeley, and Olson but few Canadian poets embodied their ideals because the embryonic Black Mountain influence had not yet been widely felt in Canada. Another probable reason was that the social function of poetry and the social-realist poetic fostered by Preview and First Statement in the early Forties, remained a strong motivation for Canadian writers during the Fifties. CIV/n suggests that although its editorial and aesthetic standards were not as contemporary or "modern" as those of Contact, the magazine nevertheless had no trouble finding Canadian poets who could represent its critical ideals. In general, CIV/n offered little that could be termed avant garde poetry in its pages and its more liberal attitude toward the aesthetic nature of the work it published opened the magazine up to a variety of satire, whimsical doggerel, and occasional verse as well as to serious poetry. It is in its willingness to occasionally laugh at the world while maintaining a serious critical perspective that CIV/n differs most obviously from Contact.

It has been previously mentioned that the difference between Contact and CIV/n is a reflection of the different critical positions of Souster and Dudek. Although their attitudes toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet continued to diverge during the late 1950's as the establishment of Combustion and Delta finally show, a letter from Dudek to Souster dated May 18, 1955 after both Contact and CIV/n ceased publication, places Dudek's understanding of his literary relationship with Souster and the importance

of their association with the little magazines in an interesting light:

> It will have to come to be realized, I don't know when, that what counts in poetry in this country from 1940 to 1960 or so, is yourself, Layton, and I. Smith and Scott are very thin predecessors. "Meticulous moderns" as I call them in college classes. Page and Anderson really don't count; they did nothing with what they had, and spoiled their best with mannerism, cerebration, pretentiousness, piling of metaphors, etc. Klein had failed. All of them are very nice, mind you, and good to have around; but the real trail is the one we blazed . . . from First Statement to CIV/n, Cerberus, and on. The young people are around us; but there is nobody with our drive around, as far as I can see, not Mandel, not Reaney, not Cohen. There was a kind of Zeitgeist pushed us forward and gave us the feeling from the beginning that we were onto something very important.[75]

The importance Dudek attaches to the special role that he, Souster, and Layton played in the development of modern Canadian poetry is based largely upon his understanding of their involvement with the social-realist poetic which he saw in terms of a continuum from First Statement to CIV/n. Dudek's failure to mention Contact in this regard is significant because it reveals his lingering affinity for the social and literary incentives of the Forties rather than the new aesthetic and formal incentives which were emerging in the Fifties. The young writers he had called for in the opening editorial to Contact had indeed appeared, but their attitudes toward poetry were not what Dudek had expected. Reaney, Cohen, and Mandel seemed more concerned with the archetypes of experience than with experience itself and Souster, despite Dudek's nostalgia for their former "Zeitgeist," continued to strengthen his interest in the American avant garde writers.

Thus, regardless of Dudek's personal friendliness toward Souster, by the time CIV/n and Contact ceased publication early in 1954, the critical divergence between them was at its widest point. One can imagine Souster seeing Dudek's critical views as outdated if not reactionary and Dudek in turn, viewing Souster's enthusiasm for experimental poetry as undisciplined and irrelevant. The clearest evidence of their final positions, however, can be seen in the last magazines with which they were personally involved: Combustion, which continued in the spirit of Contact, and Delta which expanded upon the critical principles set out in CIV/n. Souster began Combustion in January of 1957 and Dudek began Delta in October of the same year. These personal, one-man magazines, not only indicate the final distance between the critical views of Souster and Dudek, they also represent the principal attitudes that little magazines expressed toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet as the Fifties drew to a close.

iii Combustion

Raymond Souster's association with Cid Corman and Origin magazine has been discussed in relation to Contact but it is with Souster's publication of the first issue of Combustion in January, 1957 that the strength of Corman's influence becomes most apparent. Having grown away from Dudek's continuing interest in the social function of poetry, and seeing what he considered to be a reactionary tendency

in the growing popularity of the so called mythopoeic writers, Souster was again prompted to strike out in support of modern experimental avant garde poetry. Origin, which had ceased publication in 1956, was no longer available to do the job and so Combustion was established to take up the cause. Souster himself described the rationale behind the new magazine as follows:

> We were wide open. The idea was an international review more or less carrying on the tradition of Origin and Contact. We published new work and translations of work new to this country and new writers we could reach. But there wasn't any preconceived idea about it. We weren't trying to sell or plug any particular kind of poetry.[76]

Souster's description of the magazine as a means of carrying on the tradition of Contact and Origin negates his comment about there being no preconceived idea about it and the masthead information that: "Contributions of off-beat experimental poetry both original and translated are invited," bears this out. The fact is, that Combustion became, for the most part, an outlet for contemporary American experimental poetry and the little criticism it published was primarily that of Cid Corman. The affiliation which Souster and Dudek shared when they established Contact in 1952 had all but disappeared by this time and whereas Contact began with Dudek's "Ou Sont Les Jeunes?" the opening editorial to Combustion entitled "Combustion, or getting the breath hot," was by Cid Corman.

The editorial itself is an imprecise and discursive call for contemporary poets to write honest, subjective poetry based upon emotion rather than austerity and imposed

form. "What we have," he says, are:

> . . . poets using their poems like saving accounts, insurance-policies or receipts, trying to corner the market on Immortality. You want to become Immortal, eh? Ok. Start at Harvard. Try a Rhodes Scholarship. Edit the School Magazine. Win a few prizes. Study with Winters at Stanford or Ransom at Kenyon or crack the big time by sipping cocktails with Auden and talk Kierkegaard, Sour Grapes? Baloney! All so much evasion, fear to get a grip on any single emotion or desire, or find out what it is that grips.'

The accusation that poets have become motivated more by a desire for reputation and prestige than by the impulse to create a sincere, personal and unique kind of art is validated in Corman's view by the fact that so much precious, uninspired poetry was being published. Thus, as Dudek had done before him, in his preface to Cerberus and in "Ou Sont Les Jeunes?", Corman asks:

> . . . where are the emotions Pandora freed for us? Where hate, anger, love that has been drawn to its well, pity, sorrow, pain? Instead what? Exercises to keep professors employed and students fed by the lure of checks, the mechanics of profit, siphoning the most educated mind-marrow off to this or that greasing factory. Is it necessary even to name names? Look around you and be sick!'

As an example of the type of poetry which is truly vital and inspiring he quotes lines from Irving Layton which represent a "raw voice crying out of the skyscraping wilderness that there is spring." Thus, Corman's emphasis in this first editorial of Combustion is not so much upon the proper poetic subject matter or form as upon the need for proper artistic motivation.

Corman becomes more specific about the function of poetry and the artistic motivation necessary to produce the "true" poem in an article entitled "Breaking Into Speech"

which appeared in Combustion 3. His emphasis here is on the necessity of being aware of the significance of words themselves:

> Is it so crude and crass nowadays to use the poem as an act, as an axe even, rather than as a vanity box or tin can? A sharp edge requires keenness, whether of agony or joy. It doesn' matter what the word is, so it be truly brought into use, felt substantially, breathed not upon but with. Not rhetoric at root, but the word as breath, as the very spirit that moves us through. It is not rhetoric in Hart Crane that makes him a poet to be reckoned with, but that unlost use of words, with a sense of their efficacy. And what beauty there is in Dr. Williams or Ezra Pound has little to do with their politics, except as that gives language to their words, is part of the momentum of their push. Let's air Aristotle! Poetry is NOT a representation essentially. It is no more a symbolic act than a fart is.[79]

The stress on the natural, uncontrived force of significant poetry suggests that the poet must place an awareness of his own personality and emotions above an awareness of poetic technique or artistic form. The poem takes its shape and its significance from the poet's knowledge of himself; his breathing patterns, his heart beat. Thus Corman continues: "We must strip to the speech that moves within us, as close as breath is to the heart."[80] If this kind of attention is paid to the use of language, the poem becomes the most complete and most intimate form of human expression and is, therefore, a representation of what Corman considers to be difinitive art: "art is the economy of human nature and only serves to feed us in our being. It is what keeps us alive and going, being itself the very force of life."[81] Poetry therefore becomes, as it was for both Olson and Creeley, and presumably Souster at this time, an intensely personal utterance in which external form and

subject matter are important only in so far as they reveal the true human nature of the speaker as it exists at the moment of creation. The poet then, discovers his theme and form as he writes.

It is this quality that Gael Turnbull finds most significant in Charles Olson's Maximus Poems in "Some Notes On The Maximus Poems" which appeared in Combustion 2. After suggesting that the poems represent a process of discovery rather than a completely formulated expression of the discovery of self, Turnbull concludes as follows:

> The necessity or 'form' of the Maximus Poems is the concern of the writer, 'concern' in itself, the concern that he must find what needs to be said. Without rhyme or meter or any such devices. I believe that the Maximus Poems have all the urgency and pattern that can be found in, say, The Wreck Of The Deutchland. In Maximus, it is inner compulsion, not an external one. Yet, after all, the external pattern of Hopkins is merely the surface reflection of the inner form, which is that of a man saying what he must in the only way he can. It is this sense of the inevitable - that within the framework of the poem, the language could not possibly be other than it is- that strikes me as what is important.[82]

Turnbull's interest in Olson's "inner form" parallels Corman's theory that the true poet is one who has found his own personal voice and therefore his own personal form. Because this kind of thinking is so basic to the critical point of view taken by the magazine, it is evident that Combustion, like Contact before it, was not primarily interested in promoting a social-realist poetic. Also reminiscent of Contact is Souster's lack of interest in marking the magazine with his own presence. Other than two very brief unsigned poems which appeared in Combustion 1, and a few slight

editorial comments, he remains entirely anonymous throughout the fifteen issues.[83] Souster was most concerned with making what he and Corman considered to be the best contemporary poetry available to a wider reading audience. In keeping with this aim each issue contained a section entitled either "Recent Combustions," "Combustions," or "Combustibles" in which an annotated list of current books from Contact Press, City Lights, Origin, Jonathan Williams, and Divers Press was published. Souster's continuing interest in international poetry is evident from the fact that he not only published a large majority of American poets but also forty-four translations from Spanish, German, Italian, French, and Chinese poets as well as thirty-five poems by writers from England, Scotland, and Finland.

The total of two-hundred and twelve American poems published in Combustion included work by Corman (41 poems and 26 translations), Charles Olson, Jonathan Williams, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, Michael McClure, Theodore Enslin (43 poems), Larry Eigner, Barris Mills, Denise Levertov, Gary Snyder, Robert Duncan, Philip Whalen, Louis Zukofsky and Leroi Jones. This broad cross-section of poets shows that Souster did not limit his contributors to those who conformed to the poetic theories of Cid Corman. Corman's ideas provided Souster with a contemporary critical focus for his magazine but he evidently did not feel that this should necessarily eliminate writers of different persuasions. Despite Corman's presence as editorial advisor,

critical theorist, and the most frequent contributor to the magazine, Souster maintained the view that Combustion's cause was to publish contemporary experimental poetry regardless of its inspiration. Thus the new "beat" poets received considerable space in its pages; the first Canadian publication of an excerpt from Ginsberg's Howl in Combustion 2 being the most notable example. Also interesting in light of Corman's insistence upon the poem as a revelation of self rather than a comment upon objective reality, is the fact that a number of poems in the magazine are based upon social criticism. They are usually not examples of social-realism but they are frequently concerned with questioning the moral values of the contemporary world. Poems by Jonathan Williams, Gary Snyder, Barriss Mills, and Theodore Enslin are representative of this concern.

Williams's "The Shell Game" (Comb 1) considers the ramifications of the atomic destruction of Hiroshima through a combination of free form, parenthetical asides, and haiku:

```
. . . in a twinkling
      of a flash-boom
                        ("pika"-"don")
of megatons
            ("it was at this moment
             that Hiroshima City,
             the culmination of many years' work,
             disappears
             with its good citizens
             into the beautiful sky")
PS/
    "The peaches you brought us
    from Okayama
    the day before the pika-don
    were delicious"
```

This same theme is taken up on a more philosophical

level by Gary Snyder in "Tokyo" (Comb 4). Here the poet sees the human condition as a meaningless search for freedom through the futile exercise of hollow concepts such as peace, war, and religion. The truth as the poet understands it here, however, lies in an awareness of the hopelessness of believing in false causes or abstract ideologies. Thus he warns:

> Love if you will or
> Contemplate or write or teach
> But know in your human marrow
> you
> Who read, that all you tread
> Is earthquake rot and matter
> mental
> Trembling, freedom is a void,
> Peace and war religion revolution
> Will not help.

Taking subject matter from the more immediate urban environment of North America, Barriss Mills expresses a similar disillusionment. In "The Boys In The Drugstore" (Comb 3), for example, the speaker is concerned both with the superficiality of the values of contemporary society and with the fact that the impossible dreams they inspire are soon shattered by an awareness of the harsh reality which intrudes as one grows in experience:

> The boys in the drugstore are studying
> the nudes in the photo magazines
> or dreaming over the new models
> in the automobile ads. Life
> is a streamlined dream of women
> and cars. No use to tell them
> how machines rust, wear, go out
> of style, how love can be difficult.
> They will discover as they learn
> how quickly boys dwindle into men.

In contrast to Mills, Theodore Enslin's "Dead Of

Afternoon" (Comb 3) is an example of a poem which makes its social statement entirely by implication. Here, the static, frozen world characterized by an absence of life, offers no suggestion that a rebirth may be possible:

> Dumb.
> Frozen pools that hold one stone
> suspended, and the islands, waters,
> facile as the hung smoke that binds horizons.
> One stairway to the lidded sun,
> Small as a thumbnail, falling into bursts of fire,
> ravening the round hills of snow.
> Do not breathe your secret,
> do not stir the ashes of this world.

This small sampling of American poems in Combustion illustrates that although Souster was not primarily concerned with publishing social poetry in the magazine, social themes, expressed in various forms, are not uncommon. Where they are most evident, however, is in the work of the Canadian poets.

The poems of F. R. Scott were referred to at the beginning of the study of the poetry of CIV/n and his work may also serve as an introduction to the Canadian poetry which appeared in Combustion. Scott published only three brief poems all in the same issue of the magazine, but they are useful in illustrating that Combustion's Canadian poetry was frequently based upon social commentary and that Souster's editorial policy was much more liberal than it was when he published Contact. In "Brebeuf And His Bretheren" (Comb 2) for example, Scott notes that while Lalemant and Brebeuf were being tortured to death by the Indians, their brother Jesuits were burning heretics in France and Spain

with equal savagery. He observes that "For both the human torture made a feast" and leaves the reader with the final moral question: "then is a priest savage, or Red Indian priest?" suggesting that guilt, martyrdom, justice, and truth are all relative human qualities. "Street Cry," (Comb 2) is a more cynical little poem in which he compares the American government's attitude toward the atomic bomb as a commodity which can be purchased for the right price with that of a street vendor selling mushrooms. In the poem, however, the mushrooms are "fresh from / Los Alamos! / Very big, / One is enough." The last example of Scott's wit and Souster's less precious attitude toward the kind of poetry he was willing to accept for Combustion, however, is the third of his poems in the second issue, "The Call Of The Wild." Here Scott satirizes the Canadian's timid attitude toward the political and literary influences which are encroaching from the United States. Although Cid Corman may have disputed the style, he certainly would not have opposed the spirit in which the poem was written:

The Call Of The Wild

Make me over, Mother Nature,
Take the knowledge from my eyes,
Put me back among the pine trees
Where the simple are the wise.

Clear away all evil influence
That can hurt me from the States
Keep me pure among the beaver
With un-Freudian loves and hates,

Where my Conrads are not Aiken
And John Bishop's Peales don't sound

Where the Ransoms are not Crowing
And the Ezra's do not Pound.

John Lachs contributed two poems to the magazine which, though somewhat more serious than Scott's, also depend upon an ironic twist for their effect. "Extracts From A Diary," which appeared in Combustion 3, represents the thoughts of a transient who has just "Arrived in Illiopolis with the seven-thirty / freight train." While looking for a "free meal," he becomes aware of the "sobering morning" and he is led to thoughts of the person he has left behind. He composes a "fourteenth century tune" for her which explains that the purpose of his quest is: "to meet the man / who built a poem of ten thousand cogwheels / (all moving on thick rubber bands, to no useful end at all), / the first machine that is a work of art." The speaker who here is searching for evidence that even the materials of a mechanical, technological society can be transfigured into art becomes a philosophical observer of a pragmatic, dispassionate, scientific universe in "Experiments" (Comb 8). He notices that "Twice a week the sanitary garbage truck / stops in front of the Biology Building / to remove the remnants" and he then describes the remains of the experimental animals, sacrificed for the sake of science:

> . . . twelve gallon tanks
> of dead bodies: intestines
> and the convoluted brain.
> Rusty scalpels left between their rabbits'
> ribs: two emerald bird eyes that float
> on the soaked fur sea.

The irony appears when he takes the reader "two blocks away"

where the students who have dissected the animals "speak of growth / of the science of life / over cups of red coffee." This kind of social observation along with its all too explicit moral lesson is also characteristic of the two poems which Edwin Lent published in Combustion. "Its Funny How In Dreams" (Comb 8), for example, describes a dream in which he is reading chapters from the bible to an audience which has no time to listen. As he continues to read he finds the bible transformed and modernized with "illustrations: / Some like cartoons, and comic strips-- / and the words of Christ were red." Again with an ironic turn, the suggestion that nothing is safe from the corruption of contemporary advertisers and salesmen is made explicit in the final lines when leafing through the front of the book he sees "a picture of Jesus / with a coke in his hand." Lent's other poem, "A View of El Paso," which also appeared in Combustion 8, is direct commentary in the social-realist tradition. Driving through El Paso the speaker notices the depressing conditions in which the slum dwellers live. Seeing "the men, in undershirts / standing under dim light bulbs / talking . . . the women and children / huddled on front stoops and rickety balconies / staring into darkness," he realizes that he is making his trip to escape the awareness that people are forced to exist in this way:

> Yes sir! we're gonna lose ourselves in a
> sea of lights and booze
> and flesh; we're gonna drown in it!
>
> --We're gonna dance out
> that blur of men in undershirts

and dim light bulbs
and women and children
and front stoops and rickety balconies,
See ya!

A similar interest in social observation and overt criticism marks the poems of Alfred Purdy. "Sour Grapes," (Comb 8), presents two dissimilar views of the city of Vancouver. In the first half of the poem the underground world of the poor and derelict, littered by "middens of shave lotion bottles / Deposited by drunken Salish and White men, / Like an overdrawn bank account," is contrasted to the official image the city fathers present to the public. This includes: "The new public library, removed from the slums! / The new post office in a respectable location! / The homes in Shaughnessy! The university / At Point Grey near the polluted beaches!" and Purdy's indignation at the obvious hypocrisy of the social milieu is expressed with complete cynicism in the final lines:

--judge by this public face
And Mayor Hume's grin that all is well,
And God's a tourist in Vancouver
This Centennial Year.

In "Indian Reservation: Caughnawaga, 1957 -- after A. M. Klein" (Comb 10), it is Purdy's awareness of the Indian's lost identity which is central to his social theme. His childhood memory of the Indians as romantic chiefs and braves is completely shattered when he visits the reserve in 1957 and realizes that they have not only replaced their traditional values with those of the modern white man but have in fact lost contact with the nobility of their heritage:

Where are the braves? On the grassy ghetto?
But they don't think that, they're ward-citizens
With homes, loans, barns, farms -- Kitto
Or Diamond Jennes could call them Grecians
Among the maladjusted whites-- I sought difference,
But the Indian Agent said there wasn't
Any in evidence . . .

Purdy, however, is sympathetic toward the Indians and sees them as victims of a social and political system which will not allow them to survive outside of it. They thus become symbols of the levelling force of contemporary western culture and a focus for Purdy's anger. Considering the many poems he has since written which take the plight of the native people for their theme, the following lines are indeed prophetic:

Diabo, Jacco, wearing pants and shirt and tie
And sweating hard-- I can never know them, or
Spend a lifetime knowing, then be silent.

Purdy shifts the locale to the left bank of Paris in his poem "Personal," which also appeared in Combustion 10. Although it is not an example of social criticism, the poem does explore a social theme from a personal, introspective point of view. Here his tone is in keeping with the intimate conversation with the reader to whom he explains his problem. The girl he once picked up "On the Left Bank near the Odeon" looked at first the same as all other girls but after he has paid her five thousand francs for her services, he becomes haunted by the idea that she reminds him of someone he knows. Unable to remember whom she resembles he compares her to Chrysis, Circe, Thais, Cleopatra, and finally to Marilyn Monroe, Jayne Mansfield, Diana Dors,

but none of the comparisons are adequate. He then asks the reader, when in Paris, to act as his surrogate hoping that if someone else meets her they may be able to explain the resemblance. The point is that the girl represents "woman" in the archetypal sense and that the poet's understanding of her must remain a mystery. If the problem of identity were solved, his own identity as a man would be lost.

This same problem of confused identity is explored in "Love Song" (Comb 10) and again he is concerned with the many ways in which his lover resembles the archetypal lovers of history as well as with his own variable nature:

> I imagine you a bitch as bad and spiteful
> As Jezebel- then confuse you with Judith's tears
> Shining taller than Holfernes' glinting spears
> (When you sniff the acoustics of your nose are delightful).
>
> Five minutes ago I was young, five minutes ago
> I loved a woman . . . But I grew old suddenly,
> Immersed in literature and decadent philosophy
> (But I can be two men if I have to).
>
> I will seem to you like a man seen on the street
> Several times, who unaccountably disappeared,
> But was not missed or ever really here
> (Unlike the man delivering beer from Porlock's Grocery) . . .

Although Purdy is never far from the world of his immediate experience in these poems, imagination and invention are seldom surrendered for the sake of social comment alone. In "From The Chin P'Ing Mei" (Comb 10), in fact, imagination becomes the dominant element and he is primarily concerned with the creation of an illusion. The theme again is that of the lost lover but the poet is able to articulate his recovery from her death lyrically, impressionistically, and with some delicacy:

The blue incense floats through an open window,
The gardener's spade clinks in a morning sound,
A butterfly settles himself on the blowing curtains . . .
On the third night the maid brings tea.
She bends over my couch in silence,
Her body expectant of moonbeams.

Purdy's Combustion poetry thus illustrates the personal voice, the interest in history, the social criticism, and the perceptive imagery which are characteristic of his more recent work. But it is the interest in his social environment which is most evident here and this is the characteristic he shares with the majority of Canadian writers in the magazine.

Alden Nowlan's work, though more introspective and confessional, provides further examples of this tendency. In "Saturday Night" (Comb 13) he observes that the boys who drive up and down Main Street wear "leather jackets and levi's" as underclothing and automobiles as "their real clothing." "Fifteen Thousand Feet Above Quebec" (Comb 13) focusses attention on a young mother and child he once saw on a train. Being a very young, timid mother, Nowlan associates her with the street culture he described in "Saturday Night." She seems to him a girl who:

. . . hadn't counted on this
quick on her back in the back seat,
(surprised that love was hard as a screw driver
when all the songs made her expect softness)

Her pregnancy and sudden motherhood are evidence of the way in which whole lives are often changed by accident and her significance for Nowlan is that he too becomes a changed person after realizing this. It is only the train which

"remains unchanged, the same / in Montreal, Smiths Falls and Peterboro."

Nowlan continues his inquiry into various aspects of social behavior in several other poems as well. In "Steve Johnson's Daughter At His Death" (Comb 13) for example, he is aware that the friends and neighbours who came to mourn the death of Steve Johnson, do so not only out of respect for the man but also because they unconsciously enjoy the experience. They look upon his daughter with sadness too, never realizing that: "Of course she's sad / still it's a great adventure: / her father dead." She also takes an unexplainable pleasure in the experience of remorse, and it is this truth about human nature that Nowlan wishes to reveal:

> They look at her too,
> she knows it-- last night
> she refused to come in from the barn,
> lay in the haymow listening
> to all the people pleading.
> Oh, she was sad,
> but it was a fine feeling.

Other characters also have hidden sides of their personality. "The Gravedigger" (Comb 13) is a man who, "on certain days, / the portents favorable . . . can lie on his back, / the digging finished, / look up and see the stars." "Craig Selby" (Comb 14), on the other hand, is a man who relishes the fact that he is able to hide his true personality from others: " . . . it is so easy / to fool them-- / the sane bastards. / I can talk / about weather, eat, / preside at meetings / of the PTA. / They don't know." Similarly

in "Eleanore" (Comb 13) the appearance and motives of the girl who walked home with him from school for two months "and talked Christ Jesus " are also only a mask. Her truer nature is not revealed:

> Until the day,
> her parents somewhere,
>
> I stopped for her
> and she said come in-
>
> and she stood in the kitchen,
> mother naked.

The tough lumberjacks described in "The Song Makers" (Comb 14) also have a discreet, sensitive quality about them which reveals itself only in their songs. Nowlan is fascinated by the incongruity between these men who "ate beans / three times a day, November to March, / ending each cut / with a thirty day drunk" and their songs which "were so prim / . . . the heroines invariably / had tresses instead of hair / and smelled like no flowers / but roses." Even though the nature of their work forces them to live crudely and violently, it can never completely destroy the sensitive, romantic qualities which are also a part of their manhood.

Two poems illustrate Nowlan's attempt to come to terms with his own weaknesses as a man and a lover. In "Touching You Tongue To Tongue In The Dark Whirl" (Comb 8), he is a drunken lover "whispering my love / into your hair" while thinking "I hold another girl / that you know nothing of." Later when he is "sober and guilty" he must confess

to himself that he has not only betrayed both women but himself as well. Similarly in "Waiting For Her" (Comb 13) his anxiety that the lover may not appear leads him to rationalize his feelings toward her. Unwilling to admit his fear, again, he must: "brace [himself] to pretend / if she comes I was sure she'd come, / if she doesn't that I don't care."

The poems that Nowlan published in Combustion show his social concern both as an observer of life and as a sensitive participant in it. His interest in the workings of the human personality is particularly evident and, as with Purdy, it is possible to see here evidence of the maturity which marks his later writing. Nowlan first appeared in Combustion 5 in January of 1958 with a brief poem entitled "Whistling Birds." Although it is not a "social" poem in the same sense as the others, it does illustrate the lyric quality which has also become characteristic of his work:

> Little bells,
> under dark water,
> ringing in the dark water,
> as the tide moves you;
> it is near morning
> when I hear you,
> shivering like flowers,
> little bells in the
> dark water.

Gael Turnbull contributed eleven poems to the magazine which are of quite a different kind. Several of them take the form of symbolic parables which attempt to explore man's relationship to abstract concepts such as truth, wisdom, fear and innocence. In "A Fragment Of Truth" (Comb 5), for example, "truth" is likened to an artifact

which has been dug up by accident from the garden. It creates problems for the man who found it because he does not know what to do with it:

> At first we kept it on the mantlepiece in the living room, but it was often embarassing because of visitors, and I eventually put it on my desk in the study, for a paper weight.

Fortunately someone breaks into the house while they are on vacation and steals it and the police are notified. The owner, however, is not sure that he wants it back, thinking that perhaps the thief has found a way to put it to good use. This same technique is repeated in "The Sun," which was published in Combustion 2. Here the sun is related to the source of true understanding and insight and the narrator of the poem provides instructions on how the sun must be perceived: "You must go indoors and draw all the / curtains and stare at it through a pinhole until / you can't stare any longer." If this is done properly, the image of the sun will remain "throbbing under your eyelids" and soon "you'll be happy, just to know, at last, / . . . that one flicker of light has lodged behind / your eyes and begun to sprout." After this occurs, the narrator concludes that it is only a matter of time before the illumination becomes so intense that the perceiver himself becomes the sun. The degree of risk involved in this kind of action is parallelled to some extent in "The Octopus Ride" (Comb 1). The people who take this ride at the carnival do so not only because it is thrilling but because it offers the chance to court possible

disaster. Unable to take such risks in their daily lives, the octopus provides an opportunity for a more extreme kind of experience. The speaker's daughter, however, is bored by watching:

> . . . She thinks it's just
> pretend, she can't understand
>
> that it really is an octopus, and we go on it because we hope that there'll be a mistake, and the creature escape the command of the man with the switch, and hurl us like cannon balls over the dovecote roofs of the little town.

This method is also employed in "A Lamb" (Comb 11), a poem which draws its imagery more directly from the urban environment. The lamb in fact becomes a symbol of the state of pastoral innocence from which urban society has fallen:

> I saw a lamb where they've built a new housing estate, where the cars are parked in the garages, where the streets have names like Fern Hill Crescent;
>
> I saw a lamb where the television aerials stand up from the chimney pots, where the young men gun their motor-bykes, where the cauliflowers and brussels sprouts grow in the back gardens.

Seeing the lamb in such surroundings is startling and the speaker attempts to tell someone about it. But because he really doesn't know what he wants to say, the attempt fails and he is left alone with his private, inexplicable awareness of its significance.

Three of Turnbull's poems deal with the self-as-victim theme in an even more surrealistic fashion. In "Since You Ask" (Comb 7) the speaker is a man trapped within a room who explains in a very composed tone of voice that:

> The scratching sound, since you ask, comes from my fingernails working at a small crevice which I have

discovered in the plaster,

> Beyond which, you don't have to tell me, there are probably bricks and even concrete.

Although his efforts seem futile, he must continue to attempt escape. However, there is no urgency in his efforts because he knows that it is only in attempting to get free that his life has meaning and that there is "no other way out." The speaker in "Learning To Breathe" (Comb 5) has a similar problem except that he is a drowning man who is "learning to breathe under water." The world is depicted as a place where the flood level is slowly rising and several of his friends have already been drowned. Determined to survive despite the difficulties, he has taught himself to breathe through his teeth. Like the man scratching at the crack in the wall, "it is slow work," but it is the effort itself which is important. Another poem of this type is "The Look" (Comb 5). Here, however, it is not the speaker who finds himself alienated from the world but rather those people who possess a special quality described as "the look." Those who have it are capable of influencing other people because of their special powers of perception. Those so gifted could be geniuses or mystics of any kind, and the point is that their unique powers often prove uncomfortable for them as well as for the society in which they live.

Turnbull's unique perception of the world is also evident in two poems which take the nature of art as their theme. "A Scar Closes A Wound" (Comb 7) compares the manner in which music fills silence with the process by which a

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scar closes a wound. Both, he says, heal "by proliferation from the cut edges to fill / the gap, and then contract, sometimes distorting the surface / but often stronger than the original tissues." In "Les Toits, a painting by Nicholas de Stael" (Comb 11) Turnbull sees the grey roof tops in the painting as evidence of the artist's wish to conceal more meaningful colors which he refuses to use:

> You have hidden it, there under the paint,
> a colour, the subject of your picture,
> under the tiles, slates, casements, chimneypots--
> that, whatever it is,
> which you don't want to see any more,
> a colour you once saw.

Thus the painting becomes a mask and, by extension, art itself becomes a compromise by which the artist avoids the truths he cannot accept. Also implied is the belief that genuine art invites the perceiver to look beyond the surface to the deeper truths contained within.

Two final poems express Turnbull's feelings toward specific men. The first, "For Gaston," appeared in Combustion 2 and the second, "The Priests Of Paris," in Combustion 11. "For Gaston" is written out of admiration for the vitality, exuberance, and creative potential of a man he has met only once. The poet compares him to a bird who lives:

> in a nest of a room in a forest of houses,
> woven with books and paintings and letters,
> with an egg at the centre that trembles, ready to burst-
> a globule of blue the sky laid at your feet.

The final vision is of the way in which the world will be affected when this latent potential becomes active creativity and "the neighbours . . . stand in the street / obstructing

the traffic" in order to see the wonderful thing he has made.

Unlike the projected influence of Gaston, the work of "The Priests Of Paris" goes largely unnoticed. They are taken for granted "as if they were necessary." The poem, however, attempts to show them as active men, entirely devoted to their calling, which is in fact, to "guard the secret purpose of the city . . . the delicate pollen of happiness." Thus, the priests, seen also as gardeners, cultivate and encourage the spiritual traditions on which the soul of Paris survives. Although they are ignored by everyone, the poet believes "that / Paris could not survive without them."

Turnbull's poems are unique among those in the magazine. Their oblique angle of vision and wide imaginative range were likely appreciated by Sousfer as representative of the type of experimental poetry he was searching for. This perhaps also accounts for the fact that Turnbull published more poems in Combustion than any other Canadian writer. Despite the long, prose-like lines, the many descriptive adjectives, a tendency toward abstraction and rather arbitrary enjambment, the poems are interesting examples of the workings of a resourceful creative mind. Even more unusual, however, are the poems of Peter Miller.

All of Miller's Combustion poetry is characterized by surrealistic imagery and bizarre analogies. Unlike Turnbull, however, the poems often seem forced in technique and diffuse in theme suggesting that Miller is struggling for unusual effects. In "Bestiary" (Comb 8), for example,

he says:

> What became of my mammoth?
> Well, it happened that he down and
> dwindled in the forest long ago
> and hid under a toadstool in the guise of a snail,
> bowler-hatted, resplendent in slime.
>
> Then this occurred to my beetle.
> He flipped over on his belly
> and after a glance at the blueprint
> stretched his neck treeward, called himself a giraffe,
> and only just in time.

These strange metamorphoses could be related to the poet's own fluctuating perception of the world, but the poem does not allow the reader to be at all sure of its subject. Rather, its effect depends upon bizarre comparisons which draw attention to themselves instead of illuminating a larger, more significant theme.

This is also true of "Explosion" (Comb 4) which begins: "Bang! went the sun / and exploded all over the sky." From here the poem simply describes the explosion in further detail, finally suggesting that this sudden and extreme behavior of the sun is like some people who are "always the life of the party." "Trees Of Chapultepec" (Comb 8), attempts a more philosophical statement but here too, the significance is lost in diffuse metaphor. The speaker compares the "elms and palms" which surround him to the men of history who were also "various and green." He is a stranger in Chapultepec, however, and therefore cannot really understand their significance. In the final stanza a modern day "balloon man" becomes the symbol of his own wish to understand the past:

(Hello a balloon man ambles
by, and about his pate
blossom the polychrome bubbles
that maybe will bear him over
the treetops to the hellbound
walls of Chapultepec? . . .)

Miller published three poems about women in the magazine which are equally convolute. "Contrast, Pigalle" (Comb 8) concerns the relationship between a "nude student part time whore / long from Bierut" and her baby which lies in its crib back "in Jakar." She sells her body to provide herself with an education and her child with a better life in the future but the poet doubts that any good can result from her corruption: "Where greed incrusting disgust / made hydras from the feminine, / curtained liking, crippled vigor, / pictured the pocked face of vice." Another corrupt woman is described in "Epitaph For Evita" (Comb 4) but this time more whimsically:

Evita was a kid with a political bent
and an elegant seat of government.
Revolving upon her lovely axis
she accrued the dues and exacted the taxes.

Her efforts are successful and soon she is, "drowned in gowns and exuded rubies / thus captivating all the boobies." Thus she becomes a heroine for her ability to flourish upon the moral weakness of government officials.

In "A Wry Rouge," which appeared in Combustion 14, Miller describes another promiscuous female. Seeing a woman he once knew as a teenager, the speaker recalls that her body which is now "a badland of wrinkles," was once "narrow / from twisting in men's arms" and that her "cropped" hair was

once "a ponytail of gold." He is uncomfrotable with her evidence that "what you have squandered / You cannot earn again," but he is compassionate toward her because she has pleased many men and has had no illusions about herself:

> You have been bawdy lewd and bold
> but you have been kind.
> Whatever your end, that you may hold
> a capsule of ice to your lips
> kissing their wit away,
> yet your words remain touched with truth,
> not lacking Grace,
> "I am not what I seem, but am a lover."

Miller's poetry is similar to Turnbull's in so far as both writers depend to a large extent upon surrealistic and highly imaginative imagery for their effects. Miller, however, tends toward forced analogies, contrivance, and sometimes obscurantism. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to understand them as experimental writers with the ability to create unusual metaphors. In sharp contract to their technique is that of W. W. E. Ross who published nine poems of his own and seven translations from the French in Combustion.

Souster's appreciation of Ross's work is well known and the poems he accepted for Combustion clearly indicate the relationship between the techniques of the two writers. They share a common faith in the virtue of simplicity and laconic, economical style as well as a sensitive ability to discover significance in the commonplace. In "Dowsing" (Comb 4), for example, Ross is quite willing to believe that "the forked twig bends" because of "the water-spirit," even though the explanation is "unscientific." He reasons

that since there is no practical explanation for the phenomenon, the spiritual explanation is "as good as any other." Similarly, he is not attracted by a scientific understanding of the "Rainbow" (Comb 13). Instead he sees it as a natural manifestation of beauty toward which men are instinctively drawn:

Rainbow

A ribbon, curved,
of bonded colors

in the east, the red
yellow green blue and

violet. We watched
the bow against

the dark cloud. Behind us
the sun.

Our shadows extended
toward the rainbow.

Just as the mysterious beauty of the rainbow and the divining fork cannot be logically explained, so the movements of the "Great Blue Heron" (Comb 13) are equally inscrutable. While the bird also represents natural beauty and specialization, its real significance lies in the fact that it is "wild and shy, / anachronistic almost, along / the summer lake's / shore, seeking / what?" In this case, however, the poet does not fear that its significance may be diminished through scientific explanation, but rather that its presence may be eliminated entirely by a foolish hunter who: "may yet seek out / that refuge hidden through the years / to end abruptly / its daily flying freedom.

Besides these concerns, Ross also shows interest in

human nature. In "The Old China Man" (Comb 7) he is puzzled by the perpetual smile with which the man greets him when visiting the laundry. After considering the possibility that it is traditional defense against adversity, he realizes, more significantly, that whatever the reason behind "the smile: / I've grown older / quite a lot / but he hasn't got / any older at all." Similarly in "Culvert" (Comb 13) he is sensitive to the pleasure that men take in the knowledge that their work has been successful regardless of how trivial the work itself may seem. As they work "with shovels and rods," to unblock the culvert, he thinks:

What pleasure

will be for them when they hear
under their feet

as they stand on the road, listening,
the rapid gurgle

the rush the splashing
of water running freely!

There are two poems in which Ross is concerned primarily with himself. "Perplexity" (Comb 7) is a simple and brief statement of his astonishment at "how one little drink / and another little drink / can empty a bottle / in no time at all." The poem implies, finally, that what is incredible is not the amount that people can drink, but the swiftness with which time passes when the circumstances are enjoyable. This is why the "near empty" bottle becomes "A wonder / never / cease from / wondering at." In "On The Road," which also appeared in Combustion 7, a simple encounter with a dead animal on the road becomes an encounter

with the spectre of mortality itself. As he approaches the body and drives around it he sees: "A crow / staggering, as if drunk / with blood, from a speckled red / and white and black / run-over dead skunk." In "On The Streets Of Montreal" and "News Report From Above," both of which appeared in Combustion 3, Ross presents the reader with a more topical point of view. By means of a series of aphoristic stanzas, "On The Streets Of Montreal" warns of the impending social revolution which is fermenting beneath the surface of external appearances. Many seemingly minor irregularities are described, but amid the falling snowflakes, the heart of the problem is racial:

> On the streets of Montreal
> The poor grow little and the rich grow tall.
> The English grow big and the French grow small
> On the streets of Montreal

Thus the conclusion of the poem foresees a violent future for the city. Unless some charges can be made it is not only snowflakes which will come down:

> On the streets of Montreal
> Guns will bang and heads will fall.
> The revolution will level all
> On the streets of Montreal.

Whereas this poem predicts a bleak political future for Montreal and the province of Quebec, "News Report From Above" predicts a similarly bleak future for W. B. Yeats and other non-Christian artists when they reach heaven. As in the former poem, this one disguises serious intentions beneath a comical style:

> We arrived before the pearly gates.
> Waiting outside was Butler Yeats.

CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE
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THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

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TITLE/TITRE
THE FUNCTION OF POETRY AND THE ROLE OF THE POET...

"They won't let me in today," he said,
"I've got to bone up on religious ed."

T. S. Eliot, on the other hand, is admitted quite readily into heaven since "He knows the password. He'd learned it well." Yeats, and writers like him who have had the courage of their own convictions and have not settled for a particularly Christian tradition, are left "Outside in the cold and darkness." Ross allows him to explain his plight as follows:

Lacking a truly scholarly tact
I mixed up the motion with the fact;
Tried, like Peer Gynt, to be myself.
An error. It's Put me on the shelf!

Ross published in various issues of Combustion throughout its existence and this suggests that Souster had a continuing interest in his work and that Ross himself considered the magazine a suitable outlet for his writing. The fact that the only poems that Irving Layton and Louis Dudek published in Combustion appeared in the first issue suggests that their enthusiasm was not as great.

Layton and Dudek had only a few occasional poems printed in Combustion 1, apparently as a token gesture to get the magazine underway. In "Smells" Layton associates various parts of the world with distinctive odors: "In the Middle East / --the smell of oil. / In West Germany / --the smell of money . . ." and he continues down to Washington which is described as having "just a smell." A similar method is used in "Plain Words" where he describes the Americans--"Los Americanos--" as being "scared fartless" of the Communist threat from Russia and South America. His

boyish vulgarity carries on in "Anti-Romantic." Here, unlike Wordsworth or Keats, he recognizes the lover's bodily functions and describes them romantically:

> You, Love, far, fat-assed, pissed away.
> The odour was that of cut hay;
> The flood came toward me with brown mirth.
> O waterfalling earth! O light!

Layton is equally joyful in "Doubting Thomas" when the virgin tells him that "The Holy Ghost is upon us . . . Thomas, not to be deceived, / Put a finger in and soon believed." And finally, "Diogones On The Human Clod" states the necessity for self-determination as follows:

> You're answerable to no one, poor human clod.
> Not to your forbears; neither to State nor a god.
> Shameless always, give them the stink of your armpits.
> Rather than a lump, be a dog and howl in fits.

Louis Dudek's four poems in the first issue are very brief and unpretentious. Three of them, "Ideogram," "Each After His Nature," and "At Three In The Morning," are inquiries into the motivation for human behavior. In "Ideogram," the Chinese restaurant owner is especially solicitous when serving the meal and making out the customer's bill once he has discovered that the man has lost his "lady friend." "Each After His Nature" explains the difficult choices which arise when one loves "a girl whose father and / mother object." In reply to the question "should I possess her?" The following contradictory answers are given: "Yes, you should / possess her. / But the consequences! / In that event, you should not / possess her." A more simple question is asked in "At Three In The Morning." Here the observer

simply wonders whether the person next door, raising and lowering the blind in the darkness is doing so "to let in / shut out / the glare of the moonlight?" Dudek's satiric and critical nature surfaces in only one poem entitled "The Luxuries Of Asceticism." It is concerned with the role of the poet in the contemporary world and its tone is reminiscent of the poetry he published earlier in CIV/n:

> If you would write poetry, be prepared for neglect.
>
> Beauty is a language of relations, revealing
> not fire, not ice
> but a meaning between intersteces:
>
> This
> is not what the world desires or understands.
> Money, satisfaction, fame--
>
> or a "pure perception?" They are not the same.

This discussion of the Canadian writers who contributed more than one poem to Combustion shows that relatively few poets were responsible for the majority of the magazine's Canadian content. The thirty-four poems by Turnbull, Nowlan, Ross, and Purdy alone account for approximately half the total and although their work can be considered experimental or innovative to some extent, there is no doubt that the dominant characteristic they share in common is their "social" subject matter. This is also generally true of the other Canadian poetry which appeared in Combustion. But what seems most interesting is the fact that Souster chose to publish the same writers continually. It is apparent that whether the poets met Cid Corman's critical standards or not, they were the ones that Souster was most interested in

at the time. Only five other Canadian poets appeared in the magazine, each with a single poem. They were: Milton Acorn, John Robert Colombo, Margaret Avison, Kenneth McRobbie and Jay Macpherson.

Three of these poems are based upon social subject matter. Milton Acorn's "On Saint Urbain Street" (Comb 12) describes his rooming house in realistic detail:

> My room's bigger than a coffin
> but not so well made.
> The couple on my left drink, and
> at two a.m. the old man shouts
> of going back to Russia.
> About five he or his wrung-out wife
> puke up their passage money.

A similar poem is Colombo's "Huron Street" (Comb 8) except that here the poet equates the slum district with a state of mind: "The mind a tenement / with porch door five windows / overlooking Huron Street / a sidewalk trafficking thought / and the street a parking lot." Only the few trees suggest that there is a better world outside and a more natural way of life but in this neighbourhood there are "thoughts / that no one cares to think." In "June As Christmas" (Comb 8), Margaret Avison continues this close scrutiny of the immediate urban environment. Her poem, however, captures the atmosphere of the railway district, the all-night restaurants, and the mood of the transients who inhabit this world more effectively and imaginatively than any other poet in the magazine. Thus the poem deserves to be quoted in full:

June As Christmas

The counter-confessional priest
at daybreak through limp white
showed the sharp scapulae,
turned from his greased grill to take cash
and at the doorway, with his spatula
pointed, past sheds and fluted morning pigeons
across the shining steel of crisscross tracks, to
the villainous hovel still sodden in night
in spite of wire-thrum and the sky's empty clam-shell.

Nightdamp and cinder mash
draggled the rasp-grass round a
smouldering derelict caboose.

With faintly clashing gear the yards
bestirred themselves, for the forced marches
of the new day, in aluminium distance
or around corners-- somewhere out of sight.

The fragrance of tar,
smoked coffee, wet
machine parts, seagulls, dawn,
jolted a hobo torpor. After the sour
senility of night, suddenly,
a more than animal joy, a sanity
of holy appetite awoke,
breast bared for its blind suckling
a more than mother leaned, drew breath, tendering.

Cement and weeds, sky, all night diner, flesh
gathered as being; fumbling, fed.

The remaining two poems by Kenneth McRobbie and Jay Macpherson are of quite a different kind. McRobbie's "Homage To Rexroth" (Comb 6) discusses the fact that although Rexroth has finally gained recognition in Time magazine, his real significance has never been captured because: "they were too late! / They had to stand as you blew into the Bay Area / You were already news-- and literature." What he appreciates most about Rexroth is that he has never compromised his ideals and become a member of the American literary establishment. He is a writer who: "kept them waiting for

hours at Mike's place / --lounged in, and stubbed [his] cigarette in their soup." And although he is well educated and has "chewed up the sheepskins . . . spat out the abstracts," Rexroth is seen as a man who never allowed himself to become an ivory tower academic. Thus McRobbie concludes: "You spent years in front of books, and were not / caught behind one."

Jay Macpherson's little poem, "Creation," appeared in Combustion 3 and suggests that the only way to exist in a sterile universe is to create a personal world by withdrawing into love:

> I'll be a cavern, you an ocean poured
> Inward to flee the whirling void about us,
> And both lie low; and let our brooding Lord
> Make the next world without us.

Even Macpherson's contribution can be seen as a social statement and this emphasizes the extent to which the Canadian content of Combustion is characterized by social incentives. Although Souster did not state this as a criterion for judging the poetry he accepted for the magazine, it is evident that despite the influence of Cid Corman and the Black Mountain writers, Souster's choice of Canadian poetry for Combustion was not as avant-garde or as eclectic as he may have thought. The poetry is generally not social-realist in style and often tends toward a highly imaginative and surrealistic technique, but its concentration upon the human problems which result from the inadequacies of the immediate urban environment is clear. This suggests that despite his attempt to extricate Canadian poetry from the

"social" tradition and to open it up to wider international and experimental influences, Souster did not achieve this end in Combustion itself. In fact, by 1957, when the magazine began, there were already many signs of reaction to the modernist poetic that he and Dudek had been advocating for so long. One of the reasons Souster began the magazine in the first place was to counteract the growing interest in the mythopoeic approach to the world and the return to more traditional "literary" concepts of poetic form which had appeared in the work of writers such as James Reaney, Eli Mandel, Jay Macpherson, Daryl Hine, and D. G. Jones. If Reaney can be taken as a critical spokesman for this rationale, then his comments in "The Canadian Poet's Predicament" which he published in 1957, are of particular relevance with regard to the ideas Souster and Combustion represented. Speaking of the ideal apprenticeship that the modern Canadian poet should serve, Reaney observed: "he can get his training either in a university or in Bohemia. The first seems to me preferable. Bohemian mentors tend to concentrate on the latest-- all fresh, all piping hot -- Dylan Thomas, Kenneth Patchen, Canto LXXX! What a shock to learn that Dylan Thomas's favorite poem was "On The Morning Of Christ's Nativity."[84] Defined in this way, there can be no doubt that Souster and his American mentors were representatives of the "Bohemian school" which was falling out of fashion in Canada by the mid-Fifties. Further evidence of this is provided by the fact that 1957 also marked the

appearance of Jay Macpherson's The Boatman, Daryl Hine's The Carnal And The Crane, and Frost On The Sun by D. G. Jones. By 1959, the last year in which Combustion was published, Reaney's critical opinions had solidified and he offered the following advice to American readers in an article entitled "The Canadian Imagination":

> If the American reader will look at the poems of Jay Macpherson, Eli Mandel, Margaret Avison, Wilfred Watson, Douglas Le Pan, and Anne Wilkinson he will find what I consider to be the most interesting poetic world being created in Canada today. I remember once hearing a Toronto poet say that he could not understand the younger poets' love for myth since he himself was too scared to do anything else than reflect the present frightening scene directly. The answer to this seems that when you really get scared in our world, myth-making and the kind of image that humanizes our environment are an almost inevitable answer.[85]

Souster could well be the "Toronto poet" Reaney mentions, because there is no doubt that the dominant characteristic of his poetry and the poetry which he printed in Combustion was its tendency to "reflect the present frightening scene directly." Reaney's mythopoeic poetic is in fact the opposite of the spontaneous, experimental, modernist poetic represented by Combustion and the distance between these two critical attitudes is illustrated by Reaney's concluding remarks which would have found no favor with either Souster or Dudek despite their own differences of opinion:

> One can hardly be a poet in Canada without feeling the two books Fearful Symmetry and Anatomy Of Criticism brooding over one's literary programme . . . Frye's precision and organization are reflected, I think, in the precision and organization with which some of the mythopoeic poets mentioned above handle their themes. This brings up the vexed question of just what poets owe to literary criticism. One of the

answers increasingly heard in Canadian literary circles, and the matter is still absorbing a great deal of heated attention, is that it owes as much as it can steal from it. It saves time if nothing else to have a book like Anatomy Of Criticism around and I consider it to be the poet's handbook that T. S. Eliot's criticism failed to produce.[86]

Thus, by the late 1950's Northrop Frye had become the mythopoeic writers' counterpart to the Corman, Creeley, Olson group. Since the myth-poets could receive only minimal representation in the Canadian poetry magazines of the Fifties which were dominated by Souster and Dudek, Reaney took it upon himself to establish Alphabet in 1960 as an outlet for their work and in so doing he helped veer Canadian poetry away from the social incentives which had dominated it for so long. But the fact remains that throughout the Forties and Fifties the poetry which appeared in Canadian little magazines was to a large extent a poetry of immediate experience. Although the social-realist poetic of the Forties was modified to some extent by Contact, its Canadian poetry generally remained social in theme. It has been shown that this was also the case with Combustion.

Even though Corman's critical ideals are not borne out to any great extent in the Canadian poetry Souster published in Combustion, the magazine was intended to foster an interest in poetic experimentation and to print the best current avant-garde poetry available; in short, to pick up where Cid Corman's Origin had left off. It was Souster's affinity for the current American modern poets which led to his critical conflict with Louis Dudek who never had any real appreciation for the American experimentalists,

considering their work too often obscure and formless. However, whereas Reaney and the mythopoeic writers saw no virtue in the "Bohemian" poetry of immediate experience which Souster and Combustion had come to represent and had set out to create poetry from the archetypes of experience instead, Dudek took the view that both these attitudes toward the function of poetry and the role of the poet were misguided. Thus he established Delta in 1957, not only to provide himself with personal control over a literary magazine, but also to reaffirm the integrity of Canadian poetry by emphasizing the necessity for accessibility rather than obscure experimentation and meaningful content rather than abstract mythic posturing. Dudek stated his definition of poetry and the critical principle upon which Delta was founded concisely in his editorial to the first issue of the magazine which was published in October of 1957:

> I take poetry to mean a special form of writing, rhythmic, whole, heated by imagination, but with no restrictions of subject or form placed upon it, and with the same vitality of interests that prose has: we must win back the ground we have lost to prose, and discover new ground.[87]

iv Delta

Louis Dudek expressed his interest in promoting "meaningful" and "relevant" poetry throughout the twenty-six issues of Delta he published between 1957 and 1966. In his opening editorial he explained that in order to be relevant, poetry should be made to serve the function of prose: "We want poetry as relevant and immediate as the

most exciting prose writing you can imagine."[88] By equating poetry with prose Dudek is in effect suggesting that writers free themselves from what he considered to be the chaos of random experimentation and the cryptic use of outdated mythology and return to a more accessible, public kind of poetry. Poetry that appeals only to an elite literary minority is of less value than poetry that can be appreciated and understood by a majority of average readers. By taking this critical position, Dudek diverges from both the avant-garde aesthetic evident in Souster's Combustion and the mythopoeic aesthetic advocated by those writers who were sympathetic with the views of Northrop Frye. The alternative that Dudek proposes is a return to poetry which is capable of mass appeal; a social poetic not unlike that which was popular among the left-wing critics who published in New Frontier during the 1930's. The obvious difference between Dudek's position and that of the New Frontier critics is that his thinking is based primarily upon literary and cultural considerations rather than political ones. His emphasis upon the need for poetry which has immediate and vital appeal to the average intelligent reader, however, suggests his strong concern that the social, public function of poetry be maintained and promoted.

In Delta, Dudek's persistence in this regard is relentless. Three critical commentaries in particular are illustrative of this point. The editorial to Delta 1, "Why A New Poetry Magazine," has already been cited as the funda-

mental statement of his critical and editorial principles and this statement is repeated in "Functional Poetry: A Proposal," which appeared two years later in Delta 8 (July 1959), and in his statement of "Editorial Policy" published in Delta 15 (August 1961).

"Functional Poetry: A Proposal" is interesting because Dudek intends it as a practical example of how poetry can be made to serve the function of prose. It is a critical article in poetic form. The problem it explores is stated at the outset as follows:

> For some time now (since Whitman? since Lawrence?)
> poets have been experimenting with
> new subject matter, new forms
> in the effort to break through an impasse.
>
> The problem, it seems to me, is simply
> the loss of ground to prose over the centuries
> in the subject matter of poetry
>
> and the loss of freshness in method
> as the residue of "poetic" substance
> became fossilized in decadent metre and form
> --the coral reefs.[89]

Dudek proceeds from here to a discursive discussion of literary history pointing out the manner in which poetry has continually lost ground to prose in terms of both subject matter and popularity. His premise is that if poetry made use of a broader range of subjects which were of immediate interest to the public it would gain in literary vitality and immediate social relevance. Becoming topical himself, Dudek says:

> Note first the dullness of most recent poetry
> even the best.
> (Cf. "The New Laocoon," Origin, Spring 1956.)
> I've said in Delta 1
> we want poetry "as relevant and immediate as prose matter"
> Imagine that

sniffed the doltish (as usual) Canadian Critic
(Cogswell, in Fiddlehead)
Poetry
"as interesting as prose!"[90]

The place to look for inspiration and the qualities that this new "functional" poetry should have is not to contemporary experimentalists but to the early moderns:

But I go back always to the first free moderns
Lawrence, Aldington, Eliot (then), Pound (1915)
Lee Masters (Yes! Sandburg too)
for the beginning of what we need: straight language
and relevance to our real concerns.[91]

Dudek concludes his proposal with a statement of his intention to continue to put subjects that are normally treated in prose into poetic form and thus provide further examples of how poetry may be made functional and public:

In any case, I mean to do it
here for some time, writing prose
articles and items
in this rhythm (or whatever I find)

as poetry of exposition and discourse
hoping to give permanent shape
to what is said in the lines.[92]

Although Dudek did not follow up on his intention to publish other poems of this type in later issues of the magazine, "Functional Poetry: A Proposal" remains as an interesting experiment which is evidence of the seriousness of his conviction that any subject could be treated poetically. As poetry, however, the experiment fails because regardless of one's skill, the fact remains that poetry and prose are qualitatively different literary forms. To cast prose into poetic rhythms based upon a free form linear structure is in fact to defeat the function of both forms.

Despite the structure "Functional Poetry: A Proposal" achieves little that could not have been realized just as well with standard prose style. What it does provide, in keeping with Dudek's theory, is an example of how poetic form can be given a broader range of uses than was acceptable at the time. The theory simply stated was that the more widely the poetic form was used, the more familiar poetry would become to the general public and the more quickly poetry would win back the ground lost to prose.

Dudek never gave up this basic critical premise in Delta. The theory was restated again in his statement of "Editorial Policy" which was submitted to The International Guide and was published as the editorial to Delta 15. Since it is fairly brief and provides a synthesis of the general critical ideals upon which the magazine was founded it can be quoted in its entirety:

> To extend the subject matter of poetry. In line with this, to look for new and necessary treatment and techniques. Poetry with symbolism and formalism on the ascendant, lost almost all relevant content to prose; it consequently became something of negligible interest to the average intelligent reader. In fact, the poet had little more to say than that he himself was an extremely intellectual, sensitive young man. Up to, and apart from, the Beat reaction (which unfortunately is a hysterical symptom rather than a cure) most published poetry is a hollow impeccable bore. How to change this is our problem. Every resurgence of poetry in the past has come with a new sense of content. The subject matter is all here, crying for intelligent voices: it is simply the whole problem of dealing effectively in poetry with our moral and political void. Actually the job is not being done in prose; it is a job for poetry. And poets have hardly begun to see that this is a field for direct, explicit, and total self-involvement, with the whole mind and real materials of knowledge.[33]

Apart from the topical reference to the Beats, a

reader who was unaware of the author and the date of publication would not be foolish if he attributed these remarks to Leo Kennedy or some other militant critic of the 1930's. The call for relevant poetic subject matter which deals effectively with "our moral and political void" is indeed familiar. Given these principles alone, one might even assume that after twenty-five years the social poetic announced in the Thirties had again emerged and that by 1960 the attitude toward the role of the poet and the function of poetry had come full circle. Although this conclusion is not entirely justifiable, it does contain a significant element of truth. Dudek printed several articles in Delta which have definite socio-political views regarding the function of poetry.

His "Thoughts On World Literature " appeared in Delta 18 (June 1962) as a critical commentary on the need for the comparative study of international literature. Such study is important not necessarily for literary reasons but because: "We are passing through a period of revaluation, in which literature ceases to be nursed as a national possession, in which comparison, enriching relationships, and the good of humanity become the new concerns."[94] If there is any doubt that his criteria of judgement are in this case social and political, Dudek dispels them in his conclusion which rings with the fervor of a manifesto:

> One learns, most of all, how literature is really related to the life and the real problems of people. This is no longer a theory, it is an observable fact . . . The struggle for freedom, economic and political freedom, and

the absence of freedom—these are the tragic realities. And Canada, one of the free countries of the world, where writers can really say everything, stands out as the country which has least to say![95]

Dudek, however, is not interested in the creation of a larger audience for poetry which is of mediocre quality nor is he interested in popularizing the role of the poet by artificial means. One would think for example, that a man with his convictions would perhaps welcome the trend toward public poetry readings and the burgeoning paperback book trade of the early Sixties, but such is not the case. Unlike the writers of the Thirties, he was not willing to allow popularity to substitute for quality in either poetry or poets. This is made clear in an article entitled "The Paperback Revolution- Has It Guillotined Poetry?" which appeared in Delta 14 (March 1961).

The main reason that Dudek fears the growing success of the paperback book industry is because he equates it with business world exploitation and conformity which would place the desire for profit above the desire to print quality literature:

> To all intents and purposes, the paperback is all that we will have in the way of books before long. It is very important to realize therefore that on the whole this is a railroad fiction grade of books, and that its long-run effect will be to level down the values of book publishing and reading. It will reduce the book trade to a mass-appeal business and make better books retreat into specialized culture-pockets.[96]

What Dudek could not foresee was the success of the small, specialized and independent presses which, in the late Sixties, were so effective in bringing good poetry to a

wider audience than ever before. His conclusion, therefore, seems extremely ironic in light of present circumstances: " . . . the paperback is settling into its own mass-age conformity. And in that climate "minority publishing" is simply out. In this world of paperbound books, new poetry, new explorations in consciousness and art, will have no place at all."[97]

Speaking of the role of the contemporary poet in Delta 2, Dudek does not agree that the average young Canadian writer is a conformist at heart:

> That this decade has brought talk of a coming Age of Conformity, that the young are now dubbed the Silent Generation; that the general retreat from the leftism of the 1930's became a mass exodus as soon as the utopia of communism was seen as the menace of a real Soviet state with its governmental oppression and territorial ambitions, all this need not detract us from the great moral fact of radicalism at the core of contemporary life.[98]

Although he is not in favor of social anarchy or the misdirected sensationalism of the poets of the new Beat generation, Dudek is certain that their attitude represents a fundamental revolt against the pressures toward conformity and acceptance. Thus even though the poetry may leave a great deal to be desired, the radical social and political stance of the poets is in itself a healthy sign: "it [radicalism] becomes a glaring fact when we look at the new writers just outside the academic ring of the so-called conservative poets writing today. They are all desperate, hashish-crazed non-conformists, raging against your panelled and pre-fabricated Age of Conformity."[99] And Dudek is not entirely concerned with the literary implications of this

evidence of revolt either. In his concluding remarks he raises the level of generality to include a whole political philosophy as well:

> No, there can be no permanent conformity in our time. There's no danger of that. Something will break, even in the neurotic "average man" before total conformity can settle down. The real danger is some form of cataclysm as an outlet of force: that is the lesson of history.[100]

But the poet is not specifically bound to be a political person as the editorial to Delta 3, entitled "Bolitical Bashuns!" explains. Arguing that Canadian political parties, having no independent policies, simply "cultivate the art of electioneering,"[101] suggests that there is no point in an artist supporting one particular political view. The role of the poet must be much more universal:

> As for the poet in this, he is- one supposes-- the developed individual. He is not likely to find, even in the best of times, any party which completely embodies his imagined world of goods. He ought to be more complex and more extensive than any party. He may support one, but no principle or program can altogether absorb him. He must find words more manifold and intricate than any on the political arena. He is not unpolitical, he is political and more. His book is his complete platform, by it he stands or falls.[102]

These comments, and the others which have been cited in reference to Dudek's concern with defining the role of the poet in social and political terms, suggest strongly that his understanding of the function of poetry was much more closely related to social principles than that of his contemporaries. No commentary of the kind quoted above appeared in Northern Review, Contact, CIV/n or Combustion. For similar polemics one must look back to First Statement, Preview, and New Frontier.

All of this suggests that in general, Dudek was asking poets to become more immediately involved with the society around them and to make their poetry reflect their experience of it in a more direct way. In his review of Layton's A Red Carpet For The Sun (Delta 9), for example, he laments the fact that Layton's poetry has become reduced to "a series of monstrous masks and disguises."[103] In his view, the poetry has lost "its winning qualities of young protest, hatred of injustice, defense of life, to a stentorian rhetoric enveloping a mass of contradictions from Nietzche, Marx, Lawrence, Yeats and Blake."[104] The reasons for this are specific:

> (The book Fearful Symmetry had a considerable influence on Layton's development at the critical turning point; another such book was Brooks and Warren's Understanding Poetry, which I think oversold him on the virtues of analytical reading and writing.) Now a member of the "School of Frye" (Milton Wilson's phrase), his poetry is an imposing charnel-house of interlocking symbols and orotund sentences. Frankly, I miss the old socialist, social realist, and satirist of sexlessness and complacency.[105]

Layton has fallen under the influence of Frye and the mythopoeic aesthetic and his poetry has suffered for this because it is no longer direct, experiential, and honest. Two years later, reviewing The Swinging Flesh in Delta 16, Dudek follows up on this attack by describing the book as: "filled with pseudo-poetic diction, old fashioned inversions, and even would-be rhyming techniques."[106] Again he misses the truer poetic qualities that Layton expressed during the Forties: "Obviously, he does well when the archaic nonsense, the grandiosity, and even sentimentality . . . fall into the

background and when direct cynicism, humor, and coarseness are given free rein."[107] Because of this attitude, Layton and other former colleages came to understand Dudek as a conservative, reactionary critic and Layton's violent response appeared in Cataract (Winter 1962) as "An Open Letter To Louis Dudek." This letter, which is undoubtedly the most emotional, scathing public attack of one writer by another in Canadian literary history, is significant not only because it reveals Layton's personal disagreement with Dudek but also because it suggests just how unpopular Dudek's critical position in Delta had become by the early Sixties. After attacking his sexual prowess, intelligence, wife, and brother-in-law, Layton moves to more literary targets and takes particular exception to Dudek's dislike of Northrop Frye; his attitudes toward "Recent Canadian Poetry"[108] and his "Functional Poetry: A Proposal." This, however, proved no deterrent and Dudek's critical attitudes remained unchanged.

The other two poets besides Layton whom Dudek found "archaic" in his Delta 16 review were Daryl Hine and Leonard Cohen. Describing Hine's poetry in The Devil's Picture Book as "romantic idealism carried to excess, to the very extinction of poetry,"[109] Dudek goes on to relate him to Reaney and Margaret Avison as sharing with them: "a desire to excel in some direction completely irrelevant to poetry, an excess setting art above ordinary men and even ordinary poets, a kind of culture-mania that began in 1910, but that

in Canada we associate particularly with Toronto."[110] What he objects to in Leonard Cohen's The Spice Box Of Earth is that he is a decadent "way out of his time- but then we never had any real honest-to-goodness decadents, we had Carman's Vagabondia and Roberts's 'New York Nocturnes'- so it is just as well to go through with it now."[111]

Dudek attempted to offer some contemporary examples of poetry which was more in keeping with his principles or perhaps held the potential vitality he was searching for, in Delta 19 (October 1962). This issue was devoted to the young west coast writers who were gaining national recognition. Besides a selection of their poetry, the issue also contained a topical, informative article by Frank Davy entitled "The Present Scene," and Lionel Kearns's theoretical discussion of "Stacked-Verse." Kearns's article, reminiscent of those earlier contributed by Robert Creeley and Cid Corman to Contact and Combustion, is based upon the principles of Ezra Pound and therein lies its probable appeal to Dudek. It attempts to set out a theory whereby the printed form of the poem on the page can be made to correspond to the exactly with the speech rhythms that the poet would use if it were spoken aloud.[112] Although the ideas here have little in common with the main interests Dudek expressed Kearns's emphasis upon the structure of poetry itself rather than upon poetic inspiration or the need for myths and archetypes as poetic subject matter, probably met with his favor. It is also likely that the young writers introduced by Frank

Davy offered at least the hope that new poetry of the kind Dudek wanted would eventually emerge. Davy observes that: "Today the lordly and isolate types are still here, but in addition there have sprung up three distinct and purposeful groups of young poets that seem to have driven the collegiate dilettantes out of existence."[113] He goes on to describe the three groups as: "bohemian" poets of experience such as John Newlove and Roy Kiyooka; the Tish poets influenced by W. C. Williams, Pound, Creeley, and Olson, and a third, nameless group who "Unlike the Tish poets, who began with life and undue discipline and gradually admitted beauty . . . began with unrefined beauty and have slowly worked towards significance and order."[114]

Dudek published many of the West Coast writers in subsequent issues of Delta primarily it would seem because they were young energetic voices. It is unlikely, however, that he felt his critical ideals were often borne out in their work. His main concern remained with the social function of poetry and the need for the subject matter of immediate experience. One thing in favor of the West Coast writers was their affinity for the aesthetics of Williams and Pound rather than the popular "mythopoeic school," the force in Canadian poetry which Delta most vehemently opposed. Dudek wrote three articles in which his objections to this point of view are clearly explained. Behind these ideas lies the whole rationale for his preoccupation with the need to restore relevance and meaning to poetry through a

renewed use of subject matter which was of immediate social, moral, and political importance.

In "Julian Huxley, Robert Graves, and the Mythologies" which he published in Delta 4 (July 1958), Dudek states his case as follows:

> To take up the old myths, therefore, as the veritable method of poetry is very much like chewing fossils in a museum because there is a shortage of meat and fish on the market. The old mythologies are dead fish, and it would take a great poetic imagination to bring them back to life . . . unless there is a present reality which is already vivid and poetic with meaning, there is no myth, old or new, that can give us more poetry than we now have.[115]

To rely upon mythology as the subject matter for modern poetry is in his view to avoid the more important subject matter of contemporary life. Thus the mythopoeic writers were not only misplacing their artistic effort, but were also irresponsible to their duty to create poetry which was uniquely representative of the modern world. Dudek is firm in his conviction that: "The new knowledge which is of our time can be made to live on the page in its own terms, without the transformation into tribal fertility ritual or the paint and feathers of the medicine man."[116] Apparently, however, those poets who had come under the influence of Frye did not share his convictions and the fact that their literary attitudes were gaining an increasingly popular reputation by the late Fifties was one of the incentives that led Dudek to establish Delta. By 1963 his opposition had not diminished and in Delta 22 he published an article entitled "Northrop Frye's Untenable Position" which went directly to the source of the problem.

Dudek begins as follows: "I have been asking what it is about his [Frye's] position that makes it so aggravating to myself and some of the poets I know, as well as so appealing to a few disciples (Reaney, Macpherson, Mandel), when we are all of us interested in good poetry and good criticism."[117] From here he goes on to quote several particularly irritating statements from Frye's The Educated Imagination as examples. Three of them will serve to illustrate the kind of ideas about art to which Dudek objected: "Literature doesn't evolve or improve or progress"; "you certainly wouldn't turn to contemporary poets for guidance or leadership in the twentieth century world"; "The imagination in literature has no such test to meet. You don't relate it directly to life or reality."[118] These statements are of course directly opposed to the critical ideals that Dudek expresses in Delta which are consistently based upon the premises that literature can be improved, that contemporary poets should lead the way toward such improvement, and that this can best be accomplished by relating literature more directly to life and reality. The difference of opinion is fundamental. Frye's position is untenable because of his "attempt to relegate the content of literature to the status of irrelevant convention."[119] Whereas Dudek holds that poetry and art in general can only be made relevant and functional through the creative power of the artist who is closely attuned to his immediate social environment, Frye understands artistic significance as

"something that 'descended' upon [the artist] and that exists apart from him- the universal 'mythology' of literature."[120] Frye's standards of excellence and universality, then, are based upon subject matter which is external to and remote from the immediate experience of the artist and this results in a critical position which judges art by a preconceived system of norms. As Dudek phrases it: "we know from the Anatomy, there is no work of literature, popular trash or masterpiece, that Professor Frye cannot equate to some item of the archetypal system."[121] Since Frye considers the most complete form of this archetypal system to exist in the Christian Bible, Dudek sees his "central myth" to be that of the Christian religion and this, he says, is not only self limiting but also unprovable:

> I suppose that disciples must accept the validity of Frye's "central myth" on faith since I can conceive of no other way to prove it. The result of Frye's criticism, in fact, is a dogmatism in behalf of a veiled Christianity that is not unlike that of the Marxists in principle. "We know the central truth: all other opinions fit into our scheme."[122]

Thus Dudek understands the mythopoeic aesthetic to be an artificial one which results in misdirected criticism and in poetry which alienates the average reader from experiencing the significant realities of his contemporary world. It is poetry for an elite minority who are concerned with the traditions of the past rather than the present and is therefore certainly not the type of poetry which Dudek hoped would "win back the ground lost to prose."

Just as he was opposed to a critical position based upon interpretation which was wholly symbolic or mythic,

Dudek is also opposed to critical interpretation which demands that art be literally true to life. This subject is taken up in "The Fallacy Of Literalism And The Failing Of Symbolic Interpretation" which he published in Delta 24 (December 1964). In the article Dudek argues first that works of art cannot be judged in terms of how well they imitate reality because: "They are not sociological studies but pictures of life arranged in the curved and self-enclosed mirrors of art. From this language back to the real world one must leap over an intuitive void which separates the real from the imagined real."[123]

An intuitive leap is necessary if the critic is to bridge the gap between the real and the possible which it is the function of art to unite.[124] Only the critic who is capable of such intuition therefore will be successful. Most, Dudek says, rely too much upon critical standards which are external to the work itself and among them are those who insist on symbolic and mythical interpretations. Such is the case again with Northrop Frye, a critic who creates his own order to which a successful work of art must conform. In this regard Dudek points out that most often the significance of the work of art is subordinate to the working through of the critical system of interpretation:

> In deference to Northrop Frye, we will admit that the imagination tends to fall into such patterns (or archetypes) and shapes its materials around them. But unfortunately, this process does not give us any help in the judgement of literary work; nor does it provide a grand eternal order from which individual works derive. If we find such an order we have simply created it during the search; and each theorist will find his own new constellations. Symbolic thinking is

only a kind of thinking; it is not a radiation from a fixed empyrean of mythology, nor is it a guaranteed source of profound truth and value.[125]

What the critic should never lose sight of is that his literary theory is never an embodiment of the whole truth. He should also never forget that: "A work of art is one man's emotional drama. It is great if it contains in its complex of artistic relations, in its language, the fullest expression of truth about life and the most intense and convincing vision of our aspirations and desires;"[126] in short, that art is primarily a human and therefore a humanizing individual achievement.

Thus Louis Dudek, throughout his personal magazine, promoted a social-realist poetic in opposition to the ideological poetics which were in his view becoming dangerously popular in the late Fifties and early Sixties. It is interesting to note that his current opinions in this regard have changed very little from what they were when he edited Delta. As recently as 1973 he restated his basic arguments in Tamarack Review. In "The Misuses Of The Imagination: A Rib Roasting Of Some Recent Canadian Critics," Dudek fears that books such as Frye's The Bush Garden, Mandel's Contexts Of Canadian Criticism, and D. G. Jones's Butterfly On Rock, all of which represent the "mytho-symbolic" branch of Canadian criticism, are replacing the "older social-realist outlook."[127] Thus he sets out to "point out the main weaknesses of mytho-symbolic criticism and to set the opposition of the two schools in a better

perspective."[128] His thinking is familiar and entirely consistent with the views he expressed in Delta. Speaking of Frye and Jones, for example, he observes that they:

> . . . are exercising their imagination at the expense of literature and imposing their own imaginative conceptions on the work of others. Dr. Frye does this to the operations of the imagination in general: he tries to fix what is most protean of all, the creative process, into a system of predictable forms, or modes. Essentially, in the end, he makes his own imagination the norm for all literature.[129]

Far more healthy is Ronald Sutherland's critical approach in Second Image: Comparative Studies In Quebec/Canadian Literature (1973). It is, in Dudek's words:

> . . . quite a different kettle of fish, a book in the tradition of hard-headed social interpretation, bringing together French and English writing in Canada in a single work of criticism. Both the author and his approach to reality breathe a spirit of good sense and a vital concern for men and things.[130]

Dudek's preferences are clear and his conclusion to the Tamarack article could just as well be a conclusion to the over-all critical attitude that emerges from Delta: "Criticism that relates literature to reality is never so neat as ideological criticism, and it is invariably tangled up with moral issues . . . but such criticism is in the end more rewarding, because it is as rooted in complexity of relatedness as literature itself is."[131]

In Delta, Louis Dudek single-handedly attempted to re-establish the importance of the social function of both poetry and criticism which had its roots in the proletarian poetic of the Thirties and the critical attitudes of the early Forties. Although often opposed by his contemporaries who were interested in either avant-garde experimentalism

or mythopoeic subject matter, Dudek's conviction that poetry should be more accessible and relevant to the average intelligent reader was unshakeable. His tenacity is laudable and the fact that he drew so many poets into the pages of Delta suggests that the social function of art, by far the most important poetic incentive in the development of Canadian modernism since the Thirties, was still a significant motivation in the late Fifties and early Sixties. A review of the poetry that Dudek published during the first year of Delta shows the kind of writing which he felt best conformed to his critical standards.

The first four issues of Delta show that Dudek intended to keep his promise to publish poems on a wide range of subjects by a variety of writers. Of the forty-three names he included during the first year, only sixteen writers published more than one poem in the magazine during this time. The list of contributors ranges from poets who received their first publication in the Twenties and Thirties to those who were published for the first time in Delta. The ground between is covered by social-realists who became popular during the Forties, contemporary Americans, mythopoeic writers, and more recent social poets such as Alfred Purdy, Alden Nowlan and Milton Acorn.

The group of older writers includes W. W. E. Ross, R. A. D. Ford, R. S. Edgar, R. G. Everson, Goodridge Macdonald, Wilfred Watson, Fred Cogswell, Dorothy Livesay, and Ralph Gustafson. W. W. E. Ross's two poems are both satires: "A

Letter To A. J. M. Smith" which appeared in Delta 1, begins by asking why Smith does not return to Canada now that the term at Michigan State University is over. He proceeds from there to a satiric description of the quality of life that Canada has to offer:

> Things move here, things stir.
> The subway goes forward
> along or near Yonge Street
> pushingly northward;
> in spite, though of much
> that appears to be new
> the city's core stays
> the same through and through.

This kind of dynamic civic progress is complemented by an equal measure of cultural activity as well:

> In the houses, they say,
> if one takes a good look,
> one can sometimes descry
> a well-approved book,
> a novel of Scott
> or a volume or two
> of the annual space-paid
> Toronto Who's Who.

The result, of course, is that Ross describes a country with almost nothing to recommend it to the visitor. He gives A. J. M. Smith every reason to stay where he is and does not blame him at all for doing so under present circumstances.

In his poem, "Anti-Archetypal," (Delta 3) Ross indirectly attacks the contemporary literary trend toward the subject matter of myths and archetypes. Rather than the Phoenix which is described as a "stupid bird [that] was always dying though, / And not only recently," he prefers "the prancing unicorn, / The dainty beast with single horn." This is not only because that mythical beast appears less

often in current poetry, but also because it has a single horn, the uses of which remain a mystery. Ross speculates upon the various possible uses that the horn might have and arrives at the following conclusion:

> It took the wisdom of a Jung
> A Freud, and others yet unsung
> To find out what the unicorn
> Would like to do with that sharp horn.

This debunking of Canadian social and literary values is continued by Wilfred Watson in his "Ballad Of Faustus" which appeared in Delta 4. In this poem, contemporary society is shown as having sold its soul to the devil of commercial enterprise and materialism. Using various poetic forms including the ballad stanza and many echoes from the subject matter of traditional ballads, Watson's satire becomes particularly sharp:

> An unquiet ghost sat by a grave:
> The red red cock did crow,
> I have seen the leily worm
> Riding in an auto
>
> Riding east riding west
> Riding north riding south
> I have seen the leily worm
> Kiss Faustus on the mouth.

The automobile, however, is only one symbol of the system of values to which society has surrendered. Everything manufactured for the consumer market has a necessary absolescence built into it:

> Today's lamps must be filamented to burn out;
> There must be a falterthread to the stitch
> Price filaments in the bulbs;
> A limit to the burning of song;
> It is uneconomical to think, here is a lamp
> burning forever-
> Here is a shirt time cannot wear out-
> A song time shall never be done thinking.

Unlike the traditional ballads which are virtually timeless in their ability to endure, the products of the modern world must of necessity be short lived in order that production and economic growth may continue. This philosophy results in the debasement of human values as well and thus the characteristic economic Canadian citizen has become a gray, unimaginative being:

> Of all the lonely rivers
> That shudder; flow or freeze
> The river at Edmonton
> Is the saddest and grandest of these
>
> Of all the ugly iron bridges
> To make a river sad
> The high bridge at Edmonton
> Is the blackest ever made
>
> And if you ask of the people
> That by this river live--
> Why, we are the very people
> Who would build such a bridge.

The majority of the poems by these older writers, however, are not so overt in their social criticism. Several are concerned primarily with their own particular state of consciousness rather than with external realities. R. A. D. Ford, for example, published "I Say Chance Complex And Splendid" in Delta 3, a poem which deals philosophically with the problem of understanding a world which appears to be governed by a well determined pattern. Careful thinking leads him finally to an awareness of the reality that "Only the pattern / of chance has claim to validity / in this mechanistic maze." And with world-weary resolution he concludes that all he is able to do is trust that "the

right / path will be taken . . . / not caring / much if it all turns out to be / in the end a hoax a fraud / an endless cul de sac."

Goodridge Macdonald reaches a similar conclusion in "Our Loves And Deaths" (Delta 3). Realizing that love and death "Assume a pattern only in the moment / when drink or copulation separate / one from the many," he is led to conclude that "these various deaths, intangible loves, / defy our reading. If we presume to guess / it is at keyless codes." The implication in the poems of both Macdonald and Ford is that man deludes himself into seeing a world of meaningful order. Although human nature demands that patterns be discovered, the reality is that organization is in the eye of the beholder rather than in the external world itself. R. S. Edgar, in his poem "Intangibles," (Delta 1) makes the same point when he says: "It is in the dark / with these images we neither touch nor understand / that we grasp the intangible motion of hours."

Fred Cogswell, R. G. Everson and Dorothy Livesay are more concerned with their personal feelings than with a particular state of mind or a philosophy of life. Cogswell's "Snake Shadow" which appeared in Delta 2, describes the persistence with which primitive, predatory emotions lurk beneath those which are more positive. His language is characteristically sparse and his technique is impressionistic rather than realistic or descriptive:

light breaks in me
and jungle shrinks
to snake shadow

under light's skin
still and stealthy
shadow gnaws

swollen and cruel
with the blood of light
it grows

who dares let it out?
who can hold it in?

R. G. Everson's "A Poem For Jane Campbell," and "June 21" on the other hand, are miniature expressions of pure delight. In the former poem he walks "with a caracole child [who] . . . tears full tilt through motionless day" and he likens her to the spring season and to the month of May itself. In "June 21" he observes that:

> Blossoms and acorns heap the same sundial.
> No things but in emotions. Seasons turn
> Cartwhells. I laugh while huge reality,
> A mindless lout, summersaults for my pleasure.

Dorothy Livesay expresses a similar sense of elation in "Convention." Here her emotion is kindled by the infectious zeal of the Jehovah's Witnesses who have left their convention hall for the street: "all overawed / With the libations of the Lord: / Their throaty choruses vibrating still." She is moved by their enthusiasm and resolves to store the experience "Against the gloom of winter days: / Testimony of tossing flowers, / Full-throated colours shouting praise."

The three poems that Fred Cogswell contributed to Delta 2 combine the qualities characteristic of the other poets through a combination of social satire and personal confession. "Lesson For Monday" for example, deals with

the subject of cynicism by drawing analogies from a clothesline hung with washing: "Look at this wash hung on a clothesline. / The whole truth is out. / Those male briefs, for instance, / don't they / suggest something to you?" After commenting upon the other garments he decides that "Mortality's suspended" on the line and cynically concludes that it is his own wishes and his own life which hang there. In "Day And Night" he prays that men will be delivered from "this woman [who] would claim us." The male sex, he says, "is great" only "because we sweat," and he hopes that masculinity may some day be defined in terms of gentleness and repose rather than in terms of "Musculature" and "sweat." "White Snows" is a sensuous love poem in which Gustafson allows the reader into the world of his private experience where "Ingrid / My love, permits / the touch of my lips on her." Sometimes she allows her lips to touch him as well and this experience brings "definitions / Of the high white / Sierras." He takes his imaginative vision into the world of physical reality when he observes: "You would think / The mountains; / Those white snows / More moral / Than the far / Between / Bell-hung / Correlative / Valley."

Thus the older Delta poets deal sensitively with a variety of subjects in tones which range from whimsicality to complete seriousness. Their poetry is artistically competent and, in keeping with Dudek's criteria, attempts to deal with relevant subject matter in a manner which the average reader can comprehend. This is also true of the

better known social-realist poets who published in the magazine during its first year. Writers such as Layton, Souster, Gael Turnbull, and Dudek himself were all represented.

Irving Layton's poems have the tough language and social subject matter that Dudek admired most in his work. "If You Can't Scream" appeared in Delta 1. The conflict between his sexual desire and his inability to have the lover entirely to himself becomes the subject of the poem:

> Your gloved hand
> on the door,
> my stoned eyeballs
> tighten
> in the neat slingshot
> of your posterior.
>
> I know you hasten
> to another
> to bring him
> on barbarous feet
> the self same torment.

In "Chatterers" (Delta 4) the subject matter takes on both political and cultural overtones. Seeing the Romanovs, Lenin, and Kautsky described as "chatterers," Layton observes that the term is an "Epithet which clear-eyed history / in love with the real / translated into their echoing epitaph." History has diminished the significance of these men just as "the distinguished & amiable men-of-letters" have mocked the names of great writers such as Joyce, Rimbaud, and Crane. The blindness of the critics and historians enrages him and he praises the writers for being "fanatics without remorse whose pen / scraped their own and their age's pus." Just as the bold voice and

uncompromising attitude represent Layton at his best in Dudek's view, stark social-realism best represents Raymond Souster.

The two poems that Souster contributed were "Second-Hand Bookstore" (Delta 1) and "Welcome To The South" (Delta 2). Both poems deal with the immediate social environment in the realistic, forceful manner Dudek preferred. In "Second-Hand Bookstore," Souster sees "the look of death down these thrown-up shelves" and warns himself "(. . . don't kid yourself, wise guy, / your books will be here one day, / caught up in the same slow rot)." Led to further thoughts of mutability by a "young girl passing by the window," he concludes:

> So I have to get out of here
> into the living, breathing air,
> to forget about time, time's toll and terror,
> and his prize stooge Death.

"Welcome To The South" is less philosophical and depends entirely upon a description of the results of racial intolerance for its effect. A "fifteen year-old school boy, negro / vacationing from Chicago" has been found "Kidnapped, beaten / shot in the head," and Souster describes him as having been treated to "just a sample / of that good old Southern / hospitality." Simple, direct, and relevant, the poem has the subject matter and the style Dudek hoped Delta would represent. Other subjects were also acceptable, however, as Gael Turnbull's poetry shows.

Much like the poems he published in Contact, Turnbull's "An Accident" (Delta 2) deals with a surrealistic

incident in familiar language and a matter-of-fact tone. He begins the poem with: "While running to catch a bus, my heart fell out. / It was quite painless, / but I was startled, as you might imagine." The speaker then puts his heart into his raincoat pocket and is laughed at by some school children. He wonders: "How could they tell? Is this a common occurrence? Should I call my doctor?" and finally decides to store it in the refrigerator because "if it should spoil I might have trouble getting another."

As might be expected, Dudek's own poems in these early issues are topical in nature. "The National Budget," which appeared in Delta 1, attacks government and society for spending half its budget on national defense and "forty percent in / leakage and waste" such as "The Public Debt and Other Expenses." He acknowledges, however, that this is equivalent to the proportions in which most organisms spend their energy, the remaining ten percent going to living itself. This raises the question of the quality of life that results from such circumstances and he can only arrive at an angry and cynical answer: "Our evolution has never yet given a damn / for any one quality of things." This attitude is carried further in his poem "In Memory Of W.R." which appeared as the first poem in Delta 2. The editorial which accompanied it on the facing page is a memorial to the psychologist Wilhelm Reich who had recently died in an American prison. Killed by the intolerance and oppression of his own country, Dudek envisions "the vultures of black

night: / the dark frost-bitten ones," hovering over Reich's body. These are the same vultures that hover "Over blasted and burned battlefields, incinerators / of Europe." They symbolize the levelling aspect of death, which always results in the same conclusion regardless of who its victim might be. The promise of the vultures is inherent in American society which is geared toward militant protection of its own ideals and morals. Whether on the home front where radical scientific research is the enemy or abroad, where the enemy is the ideology of other nations, the result is the same:

> Black vultures, old as time's tree Ygdrasil,
> new as the erect penis
> of Eisenhower's missile,
> feed on man's twisted self-eaten heart
> that kills with love's engines.
>
> They will be fed, while love destroyed destroys.

Also in Delta 2 is Dudek's "Reply To Envious Arthur," a poem which criticizes A. J. M. Smith rather than society or politics. Smith had published a satirical poem entitled "On Reading Certain Poems & Epistles By Irving Layton & Louis Dudek" in Canadian Forum (May 1957). In it he described their ubiquitous commentary in Canadian magazines as "thick steaming words and brownish lumps of rhyme- / Manure essential in this barren clime." Dudek's reply is that Smith, whose talent and popularity are waning, is envious of their popularity. Dudek outlines Smith's literary career showing how little he has really accomplished:

> Before your first, best, gifts forsook you
> Before you'd published any book you

Had old Professor Collin sing hosannas
To you, in his windy White Savannahs.
Some six years later, bringing out your thin
First volume- how you took the critics in.

Besides being slow off the mark because of a lack of talent, Smith has also been a negative influence in Canadian criticism: "You 'scaped the country after this affair; / Then from a cloud, or from a college chair, / You wrote, in ignorance, of "traditions," "trends" / "The Cosmopolitan," "The Native"- nonsense without end." If Smith intended his original poem to be taken lightly Dudek was not aware of it. His reply is a bitter personal attack upon Smith's talent and reputation and it is evidence of how seriously he took his critical beliefs at the time.

Cid Corman and Larry Eigner, the contemporary American poets whom Souster had published so often in Combustion, both published work in Delta 2. Corman's "The Queen's Bowels" is a social poem which sees the machinery and the crew working below decks on the Queen Mary as a microcosm of contemporary society. What keeps the ship running is the same thing that keeps the modern world functioning: "The rotors of the turbine running / the shine of the slick pistons / the millimetrically-accurate / steering device that shifts like a dream / in the motion of the encompassing mind." Larry Eigner's poem, "The Air" is more oblique but it too deals with the subject of the way the world is ordered: "Harmonie der Welt / when they talk about ideal, music / and instruments, the cars go by / on wheels / and the periodic chart of the atoms / against the wall." He

suggests that despite man's ability to turn ideas into formulae and formulae into technology, the important questions about the nature of his self and his universe remain unanswered. The mystery of the heavens remains as does the unexplained reality of the human mind and body.

Besides the poems of the older established writers, work by the social-realist group of the Forties, and a small sample of contemporary American poetry, Delta also included some examples of the mythopoeic style in its first four issues. Of particular note in this regard is the group of short poems by Jay Macpherson which Dudek published in Delta 2. Although he did not look favorably upon Macpherson's technique or inspiration, Dudek printed the poems in response to an offer he had made in Delta 1. In that issue, Dudek took up the task of defending the poetry of F. R. Scott's Eye Of The Needle against the overwhelmingly negative criticism the book had received. To do this he compares Scott's virtues with those of Jay Macpherson's The Boatman which had received an overwhelmingly positive response from Canadian critics. The issues which are at stake are precisely those he expressed so often in his editorial and critical articles and, quite simply, F. R. Scott conforms to Dudek's standards regarding the function of poetry while Macpherson does not. Scott's virtues as a poet are as follows:

> (1) a strong political conscience; (2) a valuable awareness of the contemporary scene, "the very age . . . his form and pressure"; (3) a keen awareness of science and its impact on imagination and belief; (4) a sense of history; (5) precision and concreteness in the use of language; (6) a capacity for specific satire; (7) wit and genuine humour.[192]

Macpherson, on the other hand, has none of these. Her work shows:

> (1) no apparent political awareness; (2) no apparent relation to any time or place; (3) no interest in the concepts and implications of science, but a great deal in those of the Bible and of Jungian mythology; (4) no historic sense; (5) a tendency to verbal generality and symbolic abstraction; (6) a capacity for generalized satirical attitudes . . . (7) much wit but little humour.[133]

Obviously, the difference between Scott and Macpherson in Dudek's view, is simply that Scott's poetry deals with immediate, recognizable, social reality in accessible language while Macpherson creates a remote, imaginative world which is vague and impenetrable to the average reader. Dudek tries to be fair by pointing out that Macpherson "is a sensitive poet-a good 'Egg'-who begs the reader not to be rough with her," but he is really only damning her with faint praise. Her mythopoeic approach is opposite to the critical ideals that he was promoting in Delta. Despite this, Dudek concludes his comments on a positive note: "Let her poems continue to appear, here, there, and in the best of places; we would certainly welcome them at any time, without reserve, in these pages."[134]

It appears that Jay Macpherson took up Dudek's offer of publication in retaliation for his criticism because in the next issue of Delta twelve of her poems appeared and ironically, this is the largest group that any poet published in a single issue of the magazine. The poems in Delta 2, gathered collectively under the title "Pretty Ophelia!" are a series of individually titled lyrics with no particular

thematic unity between them except their common relationship to Macpherson's subjective poetic world. Often, as in "The Woods No More," the qualities of the 17th century lyric are present:

> But come, my love, another day,
> I'll give you cherries with no stones,
> And silver bells, and nuts in May
> --But make no bones.

In other poems such as "The Traveller," mythic subject matter is employed:

> Traveller to one Penelope,
> What have you to hope from me?
> But bedded on connubial breast,
> Forgetful, sunk past loss and pain,
> Perhaps you'll see my hells again.

Macpherson seems to have included as many of the devices and techniques which Dudek opposed as possible. As a result the poems, though delightful and well crafted, stand out as a collection of anomalies in Delta's canon. How Dudek must have regretted having to print a poem like "A Mermaid's Grave:"

> You who would Love's wonders see,
> Pity my extremity.
> He, by envy moved to intend
> I should make a proper end,
> Smote the waters till they boiled,
> Rent my person neatly coiled,
> Then, of the amusement tiring,
> Cast me on green ground expiring.
>
> Now unfelling earth's my bed,
> And round the cockle borders tread
> Children, singing as they go:
> "Here lies the cold mermaid, alive, alive-oh."

Much more in keeping with Dudek's critical ideals are the poems of Alfred Purdy, Milton Acorn, and Alden Nowlan. Their work in the early issues of Delta provides a

glimpse of the poets who were to become the most popular Canadian writers of the Sixties.

Purdy's "Early Winter Morning" which appeared in Delta 2, makes use of both natural and social description in order to describe a state of personal loneliness and isolation. The speaker who is "sick" of himself, escapes "in the white weather." He walks beneath a chestnut tree and imagines that its branches above are inhabited by girls who are only able to watch him as he stands below: "The cold girls in their prisons / Gazed down at me, / Pale lips, pale hands . . ." But his vision of the isolated, imprisoned girls is private and unknown to the townspeople who also pass beneath the tree on their way "to the butcher for hamburger, / Or the grocer for eggs and cheese." Only the poet is aware of "the secret glory looking down" because his life is nourished by imaginative vision rather than food from the grocer's shelves. Because the reader is left with only a vague awareness of the speaker's state of mind, and because of such forced lines as: "Yesterday's frozen footsteps mapped my route / Like a testimonial of futility," and "But I was alone as Catullus / Inside a poem with Lesbia," the poem is not successful. It does, however, attempt to deal with the immediate environment in simple language and accessible imagery and provides an insight into the poetic style that Purdy was developing.

These characteristics are more successfully employed in Milton Acorn's well known "I've Tasted My Blood" which

first appeared in Delta 3. He too is concerned with explaining his particular state of mind and temperament. His voice, however, is that of a hard-bitten man of experience who is determined to be a revolutionary. He will not settle for the world as it is:

> My deep prayer a curse.
> My deep prayer the promise that this won't be.
> My deep prayer my cunning,
> my love, my anger,
> and often even my forgiveness,
> that this won't be and be.
> I've tasted my blood too much
> to abide what I was born to.

A similar kind of raw, emotional expression is also found in the two poems that Alden Nowlan published in Delta 4. Through the vivid description of his childhood experience he is led to an understanding of the love he has for his mother and father. In "A Poem To My Mother," he describes the emotional and geographic country of his childhood as follows:

> I being twelve and scared, my lantern shook,
> shrunk to string my stomach knotted,
> breathing the sultry mustiness of hay
> and dung in the cowbarn,
> and the heifer calving.
>
> Ours was a windy country and its crops
> were never frivolous, malicious rocks
> kicked at the plough and skinny cattle broke
> ditch ice for mud to drink, and pigs were axed.

In this world where the meaning of life and death are strikingly real and where bare survival is the norm, it is his mother who provides warmth and comfort: "Under the crazy quilting of such love, / needles of adoration knit / bandages for my babied eyes, / I slept."

The portrait of his father in "His Breath Like Blackberries, My Drunken Father," is an equally honest and sensitive expression of love. Here, however, it is a physical, masculine relationship which is described:

> His breath like blackberries, my drunken father
> hugged me against his checkered wool: the sawdust
> rough on my narrow chest, clean in my nostrils;
> me in my shorts and sleepy and a little
> sulky, kicking and punching,
> helpless, and liking it.

This is the direct, honest poetic expression of reality that Dudek hoped Delta would represent and he continued to publish poetry by Nowlan, Acorn and Purdy in subsequent issues of the magazine. The popularity and critical acclaim that these writers have since achieved suggests that Dudek was not alone in his appreciation of their talent nor was he wrong in his belief that good "social" poetry could still be written.

Dudek published work by young, little known poets in the first issues of Delta as well. Their work ranges from the topical social satires of John Bishopric to the serious social criticism of George Ellenbogen and the personal philosophic observations of John Lachs and Glen Siebrasse.

John Bishopric's poems, though not significant artistically, are nevertheless enjoyable examples of youthful self confidence. Two poems which appeared in Delta 2 illustrate this well. In "The Canada Council Knows Where To Stick Its Grants" he observes that: "The land is a gong for ESKIMO SPIT / september to march. / Canadians put the

blood in it / Bishropic knows. / More truman-massey brass and starch / Bishopric blows." In "A Poet's Pride," he describes his freedom to write as being a result of his freedom from conventions: "I put that down to / the simple fact that / I am NOT queer not Jewish / not thank merciful christ / Christian / not tinted black red pink / not lemon-green / not democracy's / PATSY."

George Ellenbogen is equally unsatisfied with his society, but writes about it with considerably more seriousness and poetic skill. "Just Another Whisper" (Delta 1) is particularly pessimistic with regard to present social values and their possible results in the future:

> In this time of not yet famine
> when children are going mad
> with blood and bone
> and murder on the parlor rug
> when adults are playing chess
> with guns and drums and the young
> and death fails to discriminate
> between colors and flags
>
> the harvests of the young
> turn grey . . .

This is the same attitude toward society and the same mood that characterizes the poetry of the Thirties and, taken out of context, a reader might easily guess that the poem was published in New Frontier rather than Delta. Ellenbogen's "Into Other Valleys" which also appeared in Delta 1 is a similar type of poem. Here, however, he is more concerned with the condition of individual man rather than with general ideology. The average modern man is described as "Mr. Nine-to Five" who: "strolls over the stone / with the step of

Sunday / lost in Monday- / lost in the stock exchange / lost in the babbledrum / of noise."

Other young poets such as John Lachs and Glen Siebrasse, though aware of their social environment, are not so concerned with overt social criticism. In "Darkness" (Delta 3) John Lachs observes the faces of passengers on "the morning bus" and sees in them only boredom. He then takes this as a sign that the spark of imagination is dying in all men and that "the inner eye is turning blind / in the vitriolic mental dark." Glen Siebrasse's poem "Theory" (Delta 4) is concerned with the abstract concept of beauty rather than with man or his society. He sees beauty as "the fragile beast, / delinquent, / of each man's invention," and by referring to the beauty of a particular woman, explains that his mental image of her is much more beautiful than she is in actuality. Like all men, he prefers to remember her in his own ideal way and to create beauty of his own which is larger than life.

Thus, in the first year of Delta's existence, Dudek as he had promised in his opening editorial, published a wide variety of poetry by a large number of writers. In Delta 4 he also fulfilled his promise to print some translations and some poetry in French. The issue included translations of ten classical Chinese poems by Ping-Ti-Ho and a translation from the suppressed Russian poet Mandelstam by Peter Russell. The French poems were "Femmes Grandes et Belles" by Alma de Chantal and "La Terre, La Ronde Des

Saisons" by Lilian Wilkes. In general then, the poems embody Dudek's principle of relevant social subject matter treated in language and imagery which allow their significance to be understood by the average intelligent reader.

The last issue of New Frontier was published in October of 1937 and the first issue of Delta appeared in October of 1957. In the twenty years between many little literary magazines appeared which represented their editors' attempts to define the role of the poet and the function of poetry according to their aesthetic attitudes at particular points in time. The proletarian poetic of New Frontier initiated an interest in the social function of poetry and the social responsibility of the poet which, with modifications, continued to be the most significant influence upon the development of modern Canadian poetry revealed by the study of the criticism and poetry of the little magazines. The social incentives of the Thirties and Forties account to a large extent for the subject matter, the style, and the language that characterizes the poetry of that period and, as Delta shows, those same social incentives were still an important shaping force when the Sixties began.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter IV

[1]John Sutherland, "The Past Decade In Canadian Poetry," Northern Review IV, 2 (December-January, 1951). Also In The Making of Modern Poetry In Canada pp. 116-122, p. 118.

[2]Sutherland, p. 118.

[3]Sutherland, p. 120.

[4]Sutherland, p. 120.

[5]Sutherland, p. 121.

[6]Sutherland, p. 122.

[7]John Sutherland, "A Note On Roy Campbell," Northern Review VI, 1 (April-May, 1953), pp. 18-19.

[8]John Sutherland, "The Great Equestrians," Northern Review VI, 4 (October-November, 1953), p. 21.

[9]Sutherland, "The Great Equestrians," p. 23.

[10]The quotation first appeared in the editorial to Northern Review III, 1 (October-November, 1949) p. 3 and was printed as a motto on the back cover of subsequent issues.

[11]John Sutherland, "Edgar Allen Poe In Canada," Northern Review IV, 3 (February-March 1951), pp. 22-37.

[12]Louis Dudek, Letter to the editor, Northern Review IV, 4 (April-May, 1951), p. 91.

[13]Dudek, Letter, p. 43.

[14]Louis Dudek, Letter to Raymond Souster, June 17, 1951. In the Collection of Lakehead University Library.

[15]Dudek, Letter to Souster, March 8, 1952. In the Lakehead Collection.

[16]Raymond Souster, Letter to Louis Dudek, June 23, 1951. Quoted by Gnarowski in "Notes On The Background And History of Contact Magazine," An Index to Contact (1965).

[17]Dudek, Letter to Souster, July 17, 1951. In the Lakehead Collection.

[18]Dudek had established a steady correspondence with Pound while in New York during the early 1950's. He subsequently published articles and letters from Pound in Contemporary Verse and elsewhere.

[19]Dudek, Letter to Souster, July 17, 1951. In the Lakehead Collection.

[20]Dudek, Letter to Alan Crawley, quoted by Floris McLaren in "Contemporary Verse: A Canadian Quarterly," Tamarack Review III (Spring, 1957), p. 62.

[21]Dudek, Letter to Souster, March 29, 1952. In the Lakehead Collection.

[22]Raymond Souster, Letter to Louis Dudek in his possession, October 6, 1951. Quoted by Gnarowski in "Notes On The Background And History of Contact Magazine."

[23]Margaret Fairley, "Our Cultural Heritage," editorial, New Frontiers I, 1 (Winter, 1952), p. 4.

[24]Dudek, "Où Sont Les Jeunes?" editorial, Contact 1, (January, 1952).

[25]Dudek,"Où Sont Les Jeunes?"

[26]William Carlos Williams, "A Sort Of Song," The Wedge.

[27]Dudek, "Où Sont Les Jeunes?"

[28]Dudek, "Why A New Poetry Magazine," editorial, Delta 1, (October, 1957), p. 3.

[29]Michael Gnarowski, "Notes On The Background And History of Contact Magazine," An Index to Contact, p. 5.

[30]In the Lakehead Collection.

[31]Dudek, Letter to Souster, March 22, 1952. In the Lakehead Collection.

[32]Dudek, "Preface," Cerberus (1952), p. 14.

[33]Irving Layton, "Preface," Cerberus (1952), p. 45.

[34]Souster, "Preface," Cerberus (1952), p. 75.

[35]Dudek, Letter to Souster, December 25, 1951. In the Lakehead Collection.

[36]Cid Corman, Letter to Souster, January 23, 1952. In the Lakehead Collection.

[37]Dudek, Letter to Souster, May 6, 1952. Lakehead Collection.

[38]Cid Corman, Letter to Souster, March 3, 1952. Lakehead Collection.

[39]Raymond Souster, Letter to John Sutherland, March, 1952. In the possession of Audrey Sutherland. Quoted by Robert Campbell in Raymond Souster's Direction, Contact, Combustion, unpublished thesis, University of New Brunswick (1969), p. 109.

[40]Louis Dudek, "Contact Looks At The Little Magazines," Contact 2 (March, 1952), p. 9.

[41]Cid Corman, "A Note On Origin," Contact 3 (May-July, 1952), p. 15.

[42]Dudek, "At Two Extremes: Colonnade and Intro," Contact 5 (November-January, 1952-1953), p. 16.

[43]Robert Creeley, "A Note On Poetry," Contact 6 (February-April, 1953), p. 14.

[44]Robert Creeley, "A Note On Canadian Poetry," Contact 8 (September-December, 1953), p. 22.

[45]Cid Corman, "Cid Corman Reviews: Canadian Poems 1850-1952", Contact 6 (February-April, 1953), p. 2.

[46]Louis Dudek, "Two New Poets: Phyllis Webb and Gael Turnbull," Contact 6 (February-April, 1953), p. 3.

[47]Trio: from poems by Gail Turnbull, Phyllis Webb, and Eli Mandel, Contact Press (1954).

[48]Irving Layton, "Preface," Cerberus (1952), p. 46.

[49]Michael Gnarowski, "Notes On The Background And History of Contact Magazine," An Index To Contact (1965), p. 11.

[50]Dudek, Letter to Souster, November 11, 1952. In Lakehead Collection.

[51]Dudek, Letter to Souster, September 22, 1953. In Lakehead Collection.

[52]Dudek, "The Making of CIV/n," Index to CIV/n a Little Magazine edited by Aileen Collins in association with

Jackie Gallagher, Wanda Staniszewska, Stan Rozynski in 1953 and 1954 for a total of seven issues. Michael Gnarowski, ed., pp. 3-4.

[53]Dudek, p. 4.

[54]Dudek, "Review of Kenneth Rexroth, The Dragon And The Unicorn CIV/n2 p. 18.

[55]Dudek, "The Making of CIV/n," p. 4.

[56]As A. St. John Swift: "Billet Doux" V: 15, "Biology For Schools" I: 24-5, "The Candle and the Flame" VII: 24-6, "Hellcats In Heaven (for I.P.L., L.D. and R.S.) III: 6, "Little Review" V: 15, "Sunday Promenade" II: 13-14. As S. M. Organ Bowel: "Imaginary Reviews" VI: 29-31.

[57]Louis Dudek, "Review" CIV/n 3, p. 22.

[58]Neil Compton, "Review of Cerberus," CIV/n 2, p. 22.

[59]Dudek, "Preface," Cerberus (1952), p. 14.

[60]Irving Layton, "Shaw, Pound, and Poetry," CIV/n 7, p. 12.

[61]Robert Currie, "Don't Blame This On Bliss," CIV/n 7, p. 17.

[62]Neil Compton, "Review of Cerberus" CIV/n 2, p. 22.

[63]D. G. Jones, "The Question Of Language Prostitution," CIV/n 4, p. 16.

[64]Jones, p. 16.

[65]Editorial Letter, CIV/n 4, p. 14.

[66]"Canadian Culture: One Sample" editorial quotation from The Montreal Star, September 25, 1953, CIV/n 4, p. 11.

[67]Quotation from Kimon Friar, CIV/n 4, p. 14.

[68]Quotation from Ezra Pound, CIV/n 5, p. 13.

[69]Aileen Collins, "Letter From The Editor: Canadian Culture," editorial CIV/n 5.

[70]Collins, "Letter From The Editors."

[71]Dudek, review of The Translations Of Ezra Pound, CIV/n 4, pp. 17-18.

[72]Dudek, Letter to Souster, September 7, 1954. In The Lakehead Collection.

[73]Earle Birney, Introduction to Twentieth Century Canadian Poetry (Toronto, 1953). Reprinted in The Making Of Modern Poetry In Canada, Dudek and Gnarowski, eds., pp. 157-159.

[74]A. J. M. Smith, Poems: New And Collected (Toronto, 1967), pp. 110-111.

[75]Letter in The Lakehead Collection.

[76]Robert Campbell, "Raymond Souster's Combustion, Direction, and Contact." Diss. University of New Brunswick, 1969, p. 160.

[77]Editorial, Combustion 1 (January 1957).

[78]Editorial, Combustion 1.

[79]Cid Corman, "Breaking Into Speech," Combustion 3 (July-September 1957), p. 4.

[80]"Breaking Into Speech," p. 4.

[81]"Breaking Into Speech," p. 5.

[82]Gael Turnbull, "Some Notes On The Maximus Poems of Charles Olson," Combustion 2 (April 1957), p. 9.

[83]Combustion 15 was published as Island 6 (October-November 1960).

[84]James Reaney, "The Canadian Poet's Predicament," University of Toronto Quarterly, 26 (April 1957), p. 293.

[85]James Reaney, "The Canadian Imagination," Poetry (Chicago) XCIV, 3 (June 1959), pp. 187-188.

[86]Reaney, "The Canadian Imagination," p. 188.

[87]Louis Dudek, "Why A New Poetry Magazine," editorial Delta 1 (October, 1957), p. 3.

[88]Dudek, "Why A New Poetry Magazine," p. 3.

[89]Louis Dudek, "Functional Poetry: A Proposal," Delta 8 (July 1959), p. 1.

[90]"Functional Poetry: A Proposal," p. 6.

[91]"Functional Poetry: A Proposal," p. 6.

[92]"Functional Poetry: A Proposal," p. 6.

[93]Louis Dudek, "Editorial Policy," Delta 15 (August 1961), p. 1.

[94]Louis Dudek, "Thoughts On World Literature," Delta 18 (June 1962), p. 26.

[95]Dudek, "Thoughts On World Literature," p. 27.

[96]Louis Dudek, "The Paperback Revolution—Has It Guillotined Poetry?" Delta 14 (March 1961), p. 6.

[97]Dudek, "The Paperback Revolution . . ." p. 7.

[98]Louis Dudek, "Absinthe Drinkers or Squares?" Delta 2 (January 1958), p. 2.

[99]Dudek, "Absinthe Drinkers or Squares?" p. 2.

[100]Dudek, p. 3.

[101]Louis Dudek, "Bolitical Bashuns!" Delta 3 (April 1958), p. 1.

[102]Dudek, "Bolitical Bashuns!" p. 2.

[103]Louis Dudek, "Layton On The Carpet," Delta 9 (October-December 1959), p. 19.

[104]Dudek, "Layton On The Carpet," p. 19.

[105]Dudek, p. 19.

[106]Louis Dudek, "Three Major Canadian Poets—Three Major Forms of Archaism," Delta 16 (November 1961), p. 24.

[107]Dudek, "Three Major Canadian Poets . . ." p. 25.

[108]Louis Dudek, "Recent Canadian Poetry," Culture XIX (1958) 399-415.

[109]Dudek, "Three Major Canadian Poets . . ." p. 23.

[110]Dudek, p. 23.

[111]Dudek, p. 24.

[112]Lionel Kearns, "Stacked-Verse," Delta 19 (October 1962), p. 15.

[113]Frank Davy, "The Present Scene," Delta 19 (October 1962), p. 1.

[114]Davy, p. 2.

[115]Louis Dudek, "Julian Huxley, Robert Graves, and The Mythologies," Delta 4 (July 1958), p. 9.

[116]Dudek, p. 9.

[117]Louis Dudek, "Northrop Frye's Untenable Position," Delta 22 (October 1963), p. 23.

[118]Dudek, p. 23.

[119]Dudek, p. 23.

[120]Dudek, p. 25.

[121]Dudek, p. 25.

[122]Dudek, p. 26.

[123]Louis Dudek, "The Fallacy Of Literalism And the Failing Of Symbolic Enterpretation," Delta 24 (December 1964), p. 23.

[124]Dudek, p. 22.

[125]Dudek, p. 25.

[126]Dudek, p. 25.

[127]Louis Dudek, "The Misuses Of The Imagination: A Rib-Roasting Of Some Recent Canadian Critics," Tamarack Review, No. 60 (1973), p. 52.

[128]Dudek, p. 52.

[129]Dudek, p. 59.

[130]Dudek, p. 64.

[131]Dudek, pp. 64-65.

[132]Louis Dudek, "The Boatman—Charon—For Them," Delta 1 (October 1957), p. 18.

[133]Dudek, p. 18.

[134]Dudek, p. 19.

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